

Keeping hold of talent

As key persons within the management of pension schemes are worth their weight in gold, *Pensions Age* considers four important aspects to help retain staff – flexibility, communication, career progression and perks



whilst balancing all the other things that happen in their day-to-day lives, Hymans Robertson, head of HR, Steve Moore, says.

Sackers HR director, Debbie Holmes, agrees that being able “to offer flexible working arrangements to new and existing staff is a valuable benefit, which helps to recruit and retain staff. As well as changing working hours, hybrid working arrangements have also enabled staff to find a good work/life mix”.



Flexibility

Despite the flight to home working following the pandemic, office space is still an important place for colleagues to meet, collaborate and learn from one another, Spence & Partners head of the people and culture team, Orla Parkin, states. “We have even had requests to increase the size of some of our smaller

offices, as staff value the ability to come into the office to meet and work together,” she adds, “while at the same time many of our colleagues value working from home for some or all of their working.”

Indeed, it is important to trust people and give everyone the freedom and flexibility to do their best work,

Communication

“A positive work environment can play a huge role in the retention of staff. Some key areas of focus that contribute to this are making sure that everyone has interesting and stimulating work; ensuring that staff feel properly supported and everyone has the opportunity to keep abreast of firm-wide developments,” Holmes says.

To help keep people up to date



and supported, Perkin recommends individual check-ins with line managers, team-based communications and company-wide messages, using multiple channels.

People’s Partnership chief people officer, Deborah Finlayson, agrees that everyone having a supportive environment to continue to learn and achieve is needed. “This can be done through creating capable managers with clear goals for everyone, and teams that are respectful and inclusive,” she states.

PensionBee CEO, Romi Savova, highlights the use of a ‘happiness manager’ to regularly meet with staff “to focus solely on how they’re feeling, and how the company can support them”. She also recommends randomly matching two colleagues from across the business to help build greater relationships in a world of remote working.



Career progression

Making sure that staff can develop their careers is also vital, as “with so many great options for apprenticeships, professional accreditations and challenging and meaningful work, learning must be accessible to everybody,” Finlayson says.

Savova agrees, stressing the importance of ensuring all employees have access to high-quality learning opportunities to support individual career progression. This is imperative to creating a positive work culture, she adds.

Meanwhile, Moore highlights the



benefit of staff having a people manager to help staff plan their career.

Perks

Along with having great benefits and people policies, Moore states: “In my view, the little things count disproportionately too – like regular office social events such as theatre trips, family days out etc, as well as having a day off for our birthdays each year.”



📌 Written by Laura Blows

📌 How to create a positive work environment:

1. Don’t assume that the current environment is fine, or even judge that it’s not, without confirming. Ask people how they feel and what they want, and tell them why you are asking!
2. Look outside of your world. What are others doing, what innovation is there, what’s possible?
3. Communicate the changes that are being made and why, as well as what you aren’t doing. People will value the openness, and offering the reasons why something isn’t being done is always better than offering nothing.
4. Keep adapting and refining. Even if you achieve perfection, it won’t last! Keep feedback regular and consistent and recognise that a work environment will always warrant investment and attention.
5. Don’t just focus on huge changes. Sometimes these might be needed, but the small things always add up and individuals will take great positivity from action, even if it’s comparatively small.

NextGen vice chair and co-founder, Matt Dodds