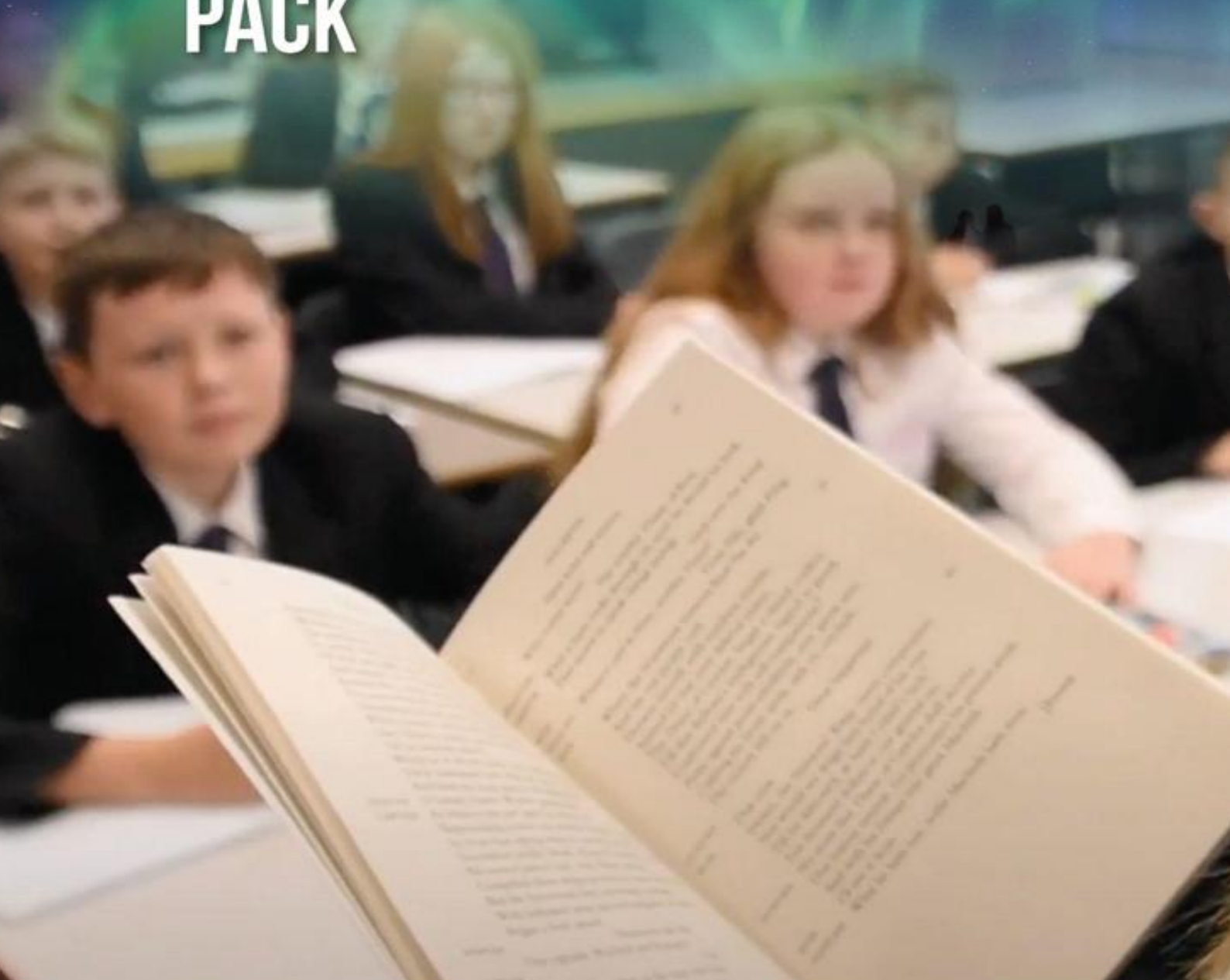




**Northern
Lights**
LEARNING TRUST

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF
PEOPLE AT NORTHERN
LIGHTS LEARNING TRUST**

APPLICATION PACK



Northern Lights



We are a Multi-Academy Trust currently comprising ten schools – primary and secondary – and over 4,200 children and young people in an area stretching from Teesside through to Wearside.



We are a Teaching School Hub, one of 87 DfE centres of excellence for teacher training and development, focused on some of the best schools and multi-academy trusts in the country.



We are an Early Years Stronger Practice Hub, set up by the DfE to provide advice, share good practice and offer evidence-based professional development for early years practitioners.

OUR SCHOOLS



Benedict Biscop CE Academy
Sunderland



Dame Dorothy Primary School
Sunderland



Grange Primary School
Hartlepool



Hart Primary School
Hartlepool



Holley Park Academy
Washington, Sunderland



Ian Ramsey CE Academy
Stockton-on-Tees



St Aidan's CE Academy
Darlington



St. Helen's Primary School
Hartlepool



St. Peter's Elwick CE Primary School,
Hartlepool



Venerable Bede CE Academy
Sunderland

Every Northern Lights school has its own values and its own vision and that's really important to us because all of our schools are there to serve our community but equally, our Trust is there to serve each other.

We do that with humility and with an openness because at Northern Lights it's not all about the academic – that is really important to us – but we know, as a Trust, we are successful if we have ensured that in an holistic way our children and young people have had every opportunity to experience, to flourish, to thrive, to understand the wonder and the joy of the world around them.

– Jo Heaton OBE, Chief Executive, Northern Lights Learning Trust

Welcome from the CEO

Thank you for your interest in the position of Executive Director of People within Northern Lights Learning Trust.

This is an exciting new position in our Trust. We have grown in size, and have further planned growth and are therefore looking for someone with the right skills and experience to join our Executive team and work with us to develop our HR offer to be the best it can be.



We are currently made up of 3 secondaries and 7 primaries across Wearside and Teesside, with our central offices based in Seaham. We currently educate around 4200 pupils and employ around 600 members of staff and serve a diverse range of schools and communities. Each of our schools have their own individual ethos, values and vision, which sit together as part of our Northern Lights vision of 'Shining Together and Stronger Together'. As a CofE MAT, our schools are a mixture of Church and non-Church schools that range in size and levels of disadvantage. We see this diversity as a real strength to learn from and work with each other.

At Northern Lights we truly value our staff and their development. As a designated Dfe Teaching School Hub and Dfe Early Years Hub for the North East, we develop the teachers of the future, as well as support staff, existing teachers and leaders. We work with over 300 schools across the North East. As a Trust we are committed to the support and development of all of our staff, including a wellbeing offer. We are collaborative in our approach and value professional development highly in all we do.

We are looking for someone whose values align with us as a Trust and has the drive and ambition to work collaboratively to provide the best opportunities and outcomes for our staff and therefore ultimately, our young people.

If you would like to find out more about this position, please get in touch.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Yours faithfully

Jo Heaton OBE
Chief Executive Officer

Executive Director of People at Northern Lights Learning Trust

Permanent position required as soon as possible

Based at Northern Lights Central Office at Seaham and all of Northern Lights Academy Trust sites

£58,946- £64,997 per annum, Salary starting point negotiable relevant to experience.

37 hours per week, all year round (number of working weeks is negotiable for the right candidate)

25 days + bank holidays per year

Green Book Pay and Conditions

Due to the growth of our Trust, we are seeking to appoint to a new position of Executive Director of People within Northern Lights.

The position is available to begin as soon as possible.

We are looking for a dynamic leader who understands the value and power of proactive HR – who wants to make a difference to the lives of our staff and children, and is looking to work in a people-centred way.

We have a vision to be creative and innovative and are looking for the right person who can make our HR offer to our schools the highest level of service, deliver strategically on HR across Northern Lights, and play a key role in the Trust as a member of the Executive team.

Our Trust values underpin our Trust vision and mission 'That everyone flourishes, with children and young people at the heart of all we do'.

If you are looking to join a people-centred Trust who play a key role in the region, employing around 600 staff, with this figure projected to rise due to further planned Trust growth, then please contact us to arrange a conversation with the CEO, Jo Heaton OBE on recruitment@nllt.co.uk

If this is you, we would really welcome your application!

In return you will receive:

- A supportive working environment that puts people at the heart of the organisation
- The opportunity to work as part of a growing Trust and shape this role
- Continuous professional development
- A range of Trust initiatives that improve wellbeing. Current initiatives include an annual wellbeing day.
- National Terms and Conditions of Employment
- Local Government Pension Scheme

Employee welfare and benefits package including:

- 24-hour GP access
- Nurse support service
- Mental health services, including stress management, mental health first aid training and bereavement support
- Free Flu vaccinations
- Counselling Services
- Physiotherapy
- Financial wellbeing coaching
- Maternity and Paternity support
- Menopause support
- Access to useful wellbeing resources
- Cycle to work scheme
- Lifestyle savings including discounts on shops, food and drink and days out

CLOSING DATE:

Applications must be received by: Friday 21st November 2025 at 1pm

We reserve the right to close applications sooner. We encourage applicants to apply early.

Shortlisting and Interviews will take place on: W/C 24th November 2025 or earlier if applications close sooner.

HOW TO APPLY:

Applications should be submitted to recruitment@nllt.co.uk , or if you prefer you can submit through post to Recruitment, Northern Lights Learning Trust, Spectrum Business Park, Lighthouse View, Building 2, Seaham, SR7 7PR

Applications will only be considered on receipt of an application form, CV's and other forms of application will not be accepted. For further information, or if you would like to arrange a visit to the school, please contact us on recruitment@nllt.co.uk

Details of the Trust can be found on our website: <https://northernlights.education/nllt/>

JOB DESCRIPTION

POST: Executive Director of People

RESPONSIBLE TO: CEO

RESPONSIBLE FOR: Strategic leadership of HR across the Trust

SALARY: £58,946-£64,997 per annum.

Job Purpose

Work closely with the CEO, as part of the Executive team, to support strategic leadership of HR across the trust and contribute to the development and delivery of the Trust's vision and strategic objectives.

As part of the executive team, the Executive Director for People will lead on people strategy aligning this to trust objectives and, foster and embed a thriving culture that will support the wider strategic priorities of the trust.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic HR Leadership

- Develop and implement people strategies aligned with the Trust's vision and goals.
- Advise the Executive team and senior leaders on the alignment of our people resources to strategies and work to ensure the HR function across the Trust allows us to achieve our Trust strategic priorities.
- Ensure compliance with employment law, safeguarding requirements, and MAT policies and practices.
- Ensure all HR practice is in line with the culture and values of Northern Lights.

Talent Management

- Oversee talent acquisition, retention, professional development, and succession planning.
- Analysis of HR / people systems and data to provide leadership insights, monitor HR program effectiveness, and make data driven recommendations to inform improvement and strategic planning.
- Lead on policy development and review, ensuring consistency and legal compliance.

Line Management

- Lead the development of the HR team by providing guidance, support, and professional development opportunities.
- Quality assure and monitor performance of the team, developing and implementing HR and people systems to ensure effective service delivery across all academies.

Stakeholder Engagement

- Build strong relationships with school leaders, recognised trade union colleagues, Governance and external partners.
- Support the vision of the executive team by inspiring teams and providing sound data-driven advice.

Employee Experience & Culture:

- Foster a positive culture, drive employee engagement and well-being, and lead diversity and inclusion initiatives to create an equitable and welcoming trust that staff and pupils are proud of.
- Lead and drive change management initiatives to help the trust to adapt and thrive.

Compliance and Risk Management

- Ensure all people practices meet the high standards of the trust.
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of employment legislation and sector-specific guidance.

PERSON SPECIFICATION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE

CATEGORY	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
APPLICATION FORM	1. Well-presented and complete letter of interest		Application
QUALIFICATIONS & TRAINING	1. CIPD Level 7 qualification or equivalent experience. 2. Evidence of continuous professional development at senior level	1. Coaching and mediation qualifications	E1,2 – Application D1- Application
EXPERIENCE	1. Experience working at a senior level of HR within in a Multi-Academy Trust or similar educational setting 2. Proven ability to lead complex change management programmes and strategy where organisational development is a critical success factor 3. Demonstrable achievement in the delivery of corporate objectives and performance improvement. 4. Experience of leading and	1. Substantial experience at senior management / board level in an educational organisation(s) of similar size and complexity	E1,3,4,5,- Application E2, 6 - Interview D1- Application

	managing HR / people teams and delivering services across multiple sites. - Experience with HR / people systems and detailed data analysis. - Ability to develop long-term vision, inspire teams, provide sound advice and decisions.		
KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING	Strong knowledge of UK employment law and HR best practice, including teaching and support staff employment regulations.	Awareness of sector-specific challenges and funding structures in education, particularly Multi Academy Trusts.	E1- Interview D1- Interview
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	- Strategic leadership skills, with the ability to develop and deliver a vision for excellence. - High-level analytical skills, with the ability to interpret complex information and present it to a wide range of audiences. - Excellent communication, negotiation and influencing skills, able to engage effectively with Trustees, senior	- Ability to represent the Trust at sector and national forums, building external networks to enhance the Trust's reputation. - Ability to implement transformation programmes and ICT system integration.	E1,2,3,4,5,7,8- Interview E6 - Application D1,2- Interview

	leaders, internal and external stakeholders. 4. Strong problem-solving skills with the ability to manage risk and make evidence-based decisions. 5. Strong leadership and team management skills with a commitment to develop diverse, inclusive and equitable working environments across the Trust, and inspire teams. 6. High level of ICT literacy, including people management software, reporting platforms, and Microsoft Office. 7. Proven ability to lead complex change management programmes and strategy where organisational development is a critical success factor. 8. Ability to work strategically and operationally, managing competing priorities.		
OTHER REQUIREMENTS	1. High level of integrity,		E1,2,3,4,5-Interview

	confidentiality, and professionalism. 2. Suitability to work with children/young people and an ongoing commitment to safeguarding, equality, and promoting the Trust's ethos and values. 3. High integrity, credibility, commitment to public service values and professionalism. 4. Willingness to work flexibly, including travel across the Trust and occasional evening commitments. 5. Ability to adapt and respond positively to change within a growing and evolving organisation.		
ADDITIONAL	1. Satisfactory references (which will be requested for all candidates progressed to interview under safer recruitment practices) 2. Enhanced DBS with barred list check		References Enhanced DBS certificate

References:

References will be requested prior to interview, unless there are exceptional circumstances, and the applicant does not give consent to do so on the application form. Please contact us to discuss further if you do not consent.

DBS:

Northern Lights Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. An application for a DBS certificate will be submitted for all candidates once they have been offered the position. For posts in regulated activity, the DBS check will include a barred list check. During the recruitment process, any offences, or other matters relevant to the position will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Any offer of employment will be subject to receipt of a satisfactory DBS Enhanced Disclosure.**Safeguarding:**

Northern Lights Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Everyone who comes into contact with children and their families and carers has a role to play in safeguarding children. To fulfil this responsibility effectively, all professionals should make sure their approach is child centred. This means that they should consider, at all times, what is in the best interests of the child.

Pre-employment occupational health:

Pre-employment occupational health checks are an essential part of the selection and recruitment process to assess if any reasonable adjustments are required. In some circumstances, an appointment with Occupational Health may be required to assess fitness for the role.

Equal opportunities:

Northern Lights Learning Trust are an equal opportunity employer. We want to develop a more diverse workforce and we positively welcome applicants from all sections of the community. Applicants with disabilities will be granted an interview if the essential job criteria are met.

Artificial Intelligence and Recruitment at Northern Lights Learning Trust

Northern Lights Learning Trust is committed to embracing innovation while maintaining fairness and integrity in our recruitment processes. We recognise that candidates may choose to use AI tools to support the preparation of their applications. While this is acceptable, we expect all submissions to reflect the applicant's own experiences, values, and suitability for the role and it is essential that AI is used appropriately.

AI must not be used to:

- provide misleading or false information at any stage of the application journey
- inflate or invent qualifications, skills or experience
- complete assessments as part of the recruitment process
- create generic responses and copy them into your application

If you have any questions about the use of AI in your recruitment process with us, please contact hadmin@nllt.co.uk