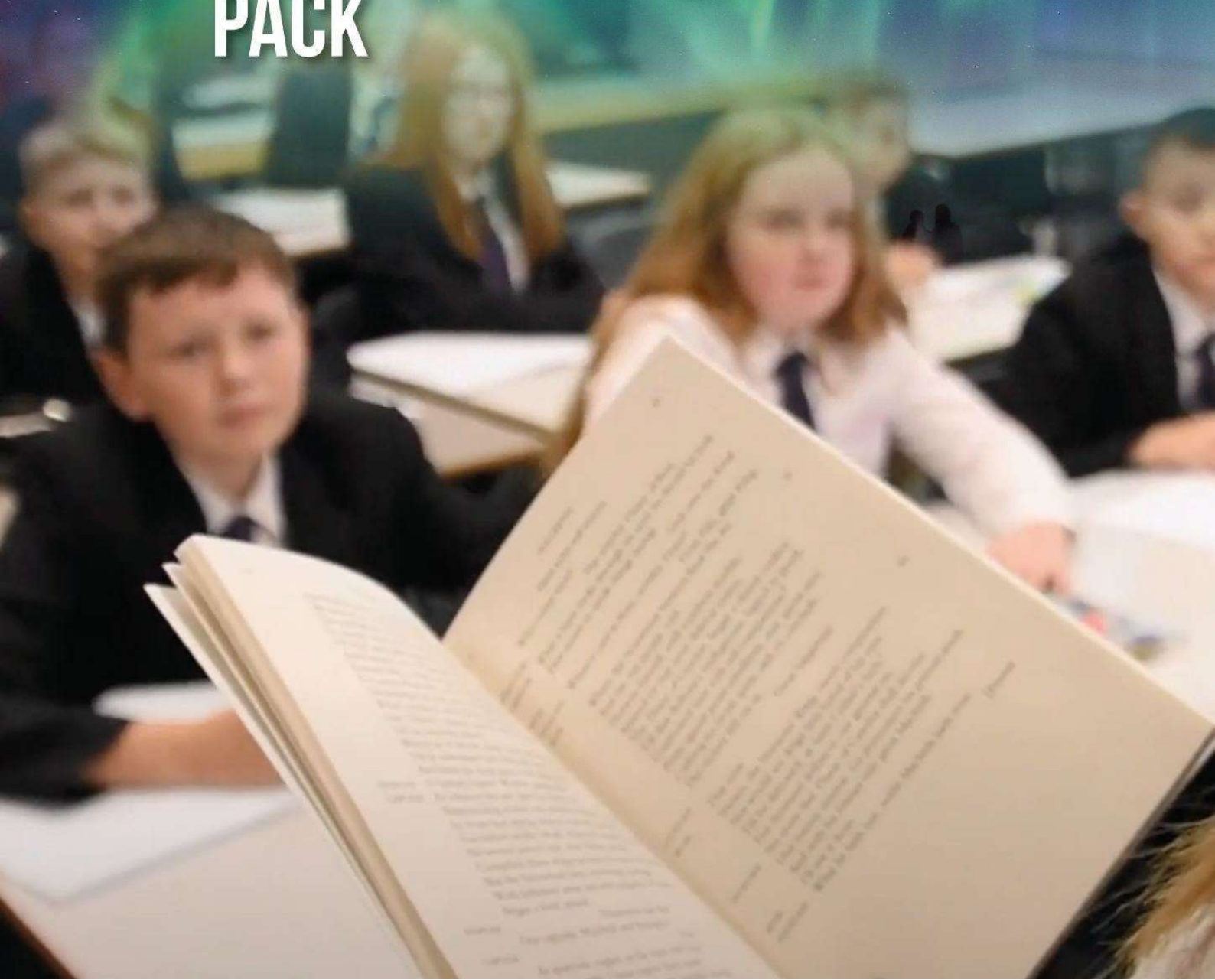




Northern
Lights

LEARNING TRUST

**HEAD OF PEOPLE
CENTRAL TEAM
APPLICATION
PACK**



Northern Lights



We are a Multi-Academy Trust currently comprising 12 schools – primary and secondary – and over 4,600 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 have two (out of 36 nationally) Early Years Stronger Practice Hubs, set up by the DfE to provide advice, share good practice and offer evidence-based professional development for early years practitioners.



We provide Initial Teacher Training, a school-based learning opportunity where you will train in a highly personal, supportive and creative environment, with purpose and challenge at the heart of it all.

OUR SCHOOLS



Benedict Biscop CE Academy
Sunderland



Dame Dorothy Primary School
Sunderland



Firthmoor Primary School
Darlington



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



Tilery Primary School
Stockton-on-Tees



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 Head of People within Northern Lights Learning Trust.

We are a growing Multi-Academy Trust that is currently made up of 3 secondaries and 9 primaries across Wearside and Teesside, with our central offices based in Seaham. We educate over 4600 pupils and employ over 700 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.

As a Multi-Academy Trust, we are at the heart of the current educational landscape, as a designated DfE Centre of Excellence as a Teaching School Hub and DfE Early Years Hub, responsible for teacher development across all ages and phases of education, working with over 300 schools. 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 young people.

We look forward to receiving your application.

Yours faithfully

Jo Heaton OBE
Chief Executive Officer

Head of People

Permanent position required as soon as possible

Based at Seaham Central Offices

Trust Support Leadership Scale point 5 – 9

(£55,504 - £61,268)

37 hours per week, all year round

Northern Lights Learning Trust are seeking to appoint to this newly created role of Head of People. You will lead the people service in a friendly, supportive and forward-thinking Academy Trust. The role will be based at the Trust Central Offices in Seaham.

We are looking for an experienced professional as you will operate as a senior people professional within the Trust. You will act as a trusted adviser to leaders, providing advice and expertise in workforce planning, employee relations, organisational development, wellbeing, and compliance.

You will have a unique opportunity to shape excellent people services across the trust. This role involves working with our newly appointed Executive Director of Trust Services to develop and implement the Trust's People Strategy, ensuring it aligns with the Trust's mission, values and strategic priorities.

The ideal candidate will hold a CIPD Level 7 qualification (or equivalent), or significant experience at a senior HR professional level.

Do you...

- Have proven experience in a senior people advisory or business partnering role
- Have experience of leading and line-managing or coaching people colleagues.
- Have experience managing complex employee relations cases through to successful resolution.
- Have experience of working with trade unions
- Have a passion for people and are driven to deliver excellence in the service provided to schools and colleagues

If so, 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
- Teachers' Pension Scheme/ Local Government Pension Scheme

Employee welfare package through Education Mutual 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

Employee benefits package through Vivup including:

- Cycle to work scheme
- Lifestyle savings including discounts on shops, food and drink and days out

CLOSING DATE:

Applications must be received by: 1pm, Thursday 29th October 2026

Shortlisting will take place on: Monday 2 November 2026

Interviews will take place on: Monday 9 November 2026

HOW TO APPLY:

Applications should be submitted via email on recruitment@nllt.co.uk or if you prefer you can submit through post to Northern Lights Learning Trust, Lighthouse View, Building 2, Spectrum Business Park, 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, please contact Jo Heaton via hadmin@nllt.co.uk

JOB DESCRIPTION

Post: Head of People

Responsible to: Executive Director of Trust Services

Line Management: People Team

Salary band: Trust Support Leadership Scale, points 5 - 9

Location: Across Trust schools with some central office working.

Job Purpose

The role plays a pivotal role in shaping and sustaining an exceptional people centred culture across Northern Lights Learning Trust. Operating as a senior people professional within the Trust, the postholder works in close partnership with Headteachers, senior leaders, and central Trust teams to deliver high-quality people service.

The role leads and develops a responsive people service, ensures consistent application of Trust wide policies and procedures, and supports leaders to deliver positive employee experiences at every stage of the employment lifecycle. You will act as a trusted adviser to leaders, providing expertise in workforce planning, employee relations, organisational development, wellbeing, and compliance.

Key Responsibilities

People Leadership

- Work with the Executive Director of Trust Services to develop and implement the Trust's People Strategy, ensuring it aligns with the Trust's mission, values and strategic priorities.
- Brings a people lens onto the Trust's strategic and operational priorities, supporting Northern Lights to achieve its priorities with a positive impact on our people, leading to Northern Lights to be a Trust of choice.
- Drive a positive, inclusive culture where staff feel valued, supported, and professionally fulfilled.
- Support workforce planning to ensure the Trust can recruit, retain, and develop high-quality staff.
- Provide expertise on organisational change, restructuring, job design, and TUPE processes where required.

Professional People Partnership with Schools

- Partner closely with Headteachers and senior leaders to provide proactive, solutions focused people advice and guidance.
- Support leaders with complex employee relations issues, ensuring timely, evidence based, and legally compliant outcomes.

- Support leaders in fostering high performance through coaching, capability processes, and effective people management practice.
- Work collaboratively with the central Trust teams (Finance, Estates, Safeguarding, SEND, IT) to ensure a joined-up service for schools, ensuring schools are both empowered and supported

Operational People Management

- Lead and oversee the work of the people team to ensure efficient people administration, recruitment processes, compliance, and accurate people data management.
- Ensure people record-keeping and systems meet statutory and safeguarding requirements (including SCR compliance).
- Oversee recruitment campaigns, supporting hard-to-fill roles and promoting the Trust as a Trust of choice.
- Support performance management cycles, absence management, and staff wellbeing initiatives.

Policy, Governance & Compliance

- Ensure all people policies remain up-to-date, compliant with employment legislation, and reflective of best practice in education people management.
- Educate, coach and train Trust leaders and wider staff with employment legislation changes
- Prepare people reports and data analysis, including workforce data, metrics, and risk updates for Trust leaders and the Board where required. Provide insights to Trust leaders and Board on the data produced driving data-based decision making
- Maintain strong relationships with recognised trade unions and ensure effective consultation and communication. Lead agenda for JCC & chair JCC meetings.
- Monitor and update all related aspects of the Scheme of Delegation
- Ensure inclusion sits at the heart of all areas of responsibility

Professional Standards & Development

- Maintain own CPD and CIPD membership.
- Provide coaching approach, training, and development for leaders and people colleagues on people management topics.
- Champion the Trust's values and model professional behaviours at all times.

Why Join Northern Lights Learning Trust?

- Opportunity to shape the people culture across a growing and ambitious Trust.

- Work alongside a committed Executive Team and dedicated school leaders.
- Play a key role in ensuring staff feel valued, supported, and empowered to deliver exceptional education for children.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

HEAD OF PEOPLE

CATEGORY	ESSENTIAL	DESIRABLE	METHOD OF ASSESSMENT
APPLICATION FORM	1. Well-presented and complete application form		Application
QUALIFICATIONS & TRAINING	1. CIPD Level 7 qualification (or equivalent), or significant experience at a senior HR professional level. 2. Evidence of ongoing CPD	1. Coaching qualification or experience coaching leaders 2. Chartered CIPD (MCIPD or FCIPD) status. 3. Mental Health First Aid qualification	Application
EXPERIENCE	1. Proven experience in a senior people advisory or business partnering role. 2. Experience managing complex employee relations cases through to successful resolution. 3. Experience leading or contributing to organisational development, change management, or cultural improvement initiatives. 4. Experience of leading and line-	1. Experience working within an education or public sector setting	Application Interview

	managing or coaching people colleagues. - Strong experience building productive relationships with senior leaders. - Experience supporting multi-site organisations. - Experience of working with trade unions.		
SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE	- Strong knowledge of employment law and people/HR best practice. - Skilled at balancing strategic thinking with hands-on operational delivery. - Excellent interpersonal skills with the ability to influence and build trust. - Ability to analyse data, identify insights, and present workforce intelligence effectively. - Highly organised, with strong project and time management skills. - Confident in working in fast-paced, evolving environment.	- Understanding of safeguarding and safer recruitment requirements - Familiarity with HR systems used in MATs	Application Interview
PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES	- Demonstrates integrity, discretion, and sound professional judgement. - Emotionally intelligent,		Application Interview

	empathetic, and able to handle sensitive situations with care. 3. Solution-focused with a proactive, positive approach. 4. Committed to promoting diversity, inclusion and staff wellbeing 5. Driven to deliver excellence in the service provided to schools and colleagues		
OTHER	1. Satisfactory references 2. Enhanced DBS with barred list check		References 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 email: recruitment@nllt.co.uk