**Job Description: Head of Operations, Discover Children’s Story Centre**

Discover Children’s Story Centre is the UK’s first hands-on creative literature space for children aged 0-11 years and their families / carers dedicated to generating a love of language, literature and stories.

 At the heart of Discover are two floors of magical Story World and a Story Garden – immersive, exploratory play spaces where children and their imaginations can roam. The Discover team also work alongside bestselling authors and illustrators to create temporary immersive adventures, designed to feed children’s creativity and develop their storytelling and creative writing skills and run a year-round programme of story events on and off site. The busy venue welcomes over 100,000 visitors a year including more than 300 school parties, with ancillary revenue generation from a family café, coffee shack, bookshop, birthday party offer, tenancies and space hires. Proudly rooted in Newham, East London, at least 1 in 10 of our audiences experience Discover for free and we work closely with a wide range of community partners, our children’s, family and teachers forums to guide our work.

In 2023 we launched a new five year strategy, ‘Stories For All’, which outlines how we want to continue to put children first, create the extraordinary, keep growing our accessibility and inclusion, play our part in protecting our planet and ensure our organisation is well run. This includes a major capital redevelopment of our site which has already delivered new infrastructure including Air Source heating and cooling, new accessible toilets, improved insulation and a giant inflatable monster on the roof. The next phase of works will take place in spring 2026 and deliver a new ground floor café, 0-2s space and inclusive vertical play feature, enabling the venue to grow and adapt to serve the next 1 million children and families. The new Head of Operations will play a key role in establishing these new facilities as Discover enters its next chapter.

**Overview**

The Head of Operations is a key member of Discover’s Senior Management Team, contributing to the development of policy, programmes and facilities. The postholder is responsible for planning and managing the operations of Discover to ensure a smooth-running, enjoyable and inclusive centre, ensuring that the building is at all times safe with a first class welcome for all visitors.

**Key responsibilities:**

**Leadership and management**

* Contribute to the ongoing development of the organisation as a member of senior management, working collaboratively across teams
* Lead a team of over 20 contracted and casual facilities and front of house staff ensuring clear communication, understanding of Discover’s policies and principles and commitment to the highest possible standards across everything we do

**Health and Safety**

* Take overall responsibility for Health and Safety across the organisation with authority delegated from CEO and Board, including maintaining up to date policies and procedures
* Ensure risk assessments, accidents and incidents are appropriately delivered and recorded
* Establish and monitor an ongoing training programme across the organisation that ensures all staff understand clearly how to work safely and ensure the safety of all visitors
* Support the Senior Facilities Manager to ensure a high standard of maintenance and presentation across Discover and a safe and compliant space for tenants in next-door Discover House
* Act as key holder when required

**Visitor experience**

* Work closely with duty managers, supervisors and front of house team to deliver a consistently positive and welcoming experience with a high standard of presentation
* Deputise for Head of Creative Learning on Safeguarding, supporting with the implementation of ongoing training and monitoring

**Cost control, IT and systems**

* Operate within allocated budgets, supporting the team to manage expenditure through appropriate systems and monitoring costs across staffing, supplies and contracts to deliver best value for money alongside Discover’s commitments to sustainability, improving and optimising contracts, systems and resources on an ongoing basis
* Ensure departmental financial processes are robust and timely
* Contract manage IT systems for café and retail and the organisational IT support contract, work closely with Head of Audiences to contract manage the box office system

**General**

* Being an ambassador for Discover, with empathy, passion and creative commitment to the organisation’s work
* Supporting other colleagues and Discover with such tasks as may reasonably be deemed necessary

**Reporting to:**

Chief Executive Officer

**Essential person specification:**

* Great track record in venue management in a visitor attraction, museum or arts venue, ideally with a significant children and families audience
* Thorough, practical knowledge of health and safety principle, processes and legislation
* Leadership and line management experience with a proven ability to manage to team
* Experience of delivering a high quality visitor experience, able to work with teams and systems to ensure this is consistently delivered
* Able to problem solve and make decisions amidst the day to day pressures of a busy venue
* Financial management experience with a demonstrable understanding of how to manage costs effectively
* Demonstrable understanding of how to implement and maintain best practice in access and inclusion
* Strong communication and IT skills
* Commitment to Discover’s mission and principles

**Desirable:**

* Training and / or qualifications in Health and Safety, food hygiene, first aid or safeguarding
* Experience of café or retail management
* Interest in children’s books and supporting children and families
* Knowledge and understanding of Newham’s communities

**Hours and place of work:**

FT (35 hours per week), typically Monday – Friday, with occasional early morning, evening or weekend working.

Our location is Discover, 383 – 387 High Street, Stratford, E15 4QZ.

1 day per week may typically be worked from home by agreement, where this does not conflict with other organisational needs.

**Holiday entitlement:**

25 days per annum plus bank holidays; up to 5 days paid carers leave; an additional day’s birthday holiday is awarded after two years of service. Sabbatical requests can also be made for up to one month’s unpaid leave after two years of service. We deliver regular training for all staff, have dedicated HR professionals and a support package for employee wellbeing with CareFirst. Employees are entitled to free hot drinks from the café and discounts on food, books and retail plus 10 free tickets annually to Discover for friends and family.

**Flexibility:**

All jobs at Discover are carried out on a flexible basis, with duties and responsibilities varying from time to time to meet the needs of the organisation without changing the general character of the job or level of responsibility. We understand that work is only one part of employees lives and endeavour to ensure that this flexibility works both ways and can support you with other needs.

**Probation and notice period:**

The post is subject to a probationary period of 3 months during which notice period is 1 week on either side.

Once the probationary period is complete, notice period is 3 months.

**Equality and diversity:**

Discover is committed to equal opportunities in employment practices and the provision of services and expects that this policy will be supported by everyone in the organisation.

We are very happy to make accommodations you require to support you in your application process, please let us know what we can do to help.