

Head of Visitor Operations

Permanent, full time, principally site based at Burghley House (with potential opportunity for seasonal hybrid working).

Salary c£50-75,000

Role Purpose

Burghley House is one of England's finest Elizabethan houses and a leading heritage destination, welcoming visitors from across the UK and internationally.

The Head of Visitor Operations is a senior leadership role responsible for delivering an exceptional, safe, inclusive and financially sustainable visitor experience across Burghley House, Park and Gardens. As a member of the senior leadership team, the postholder will provide strategic and operational leadership across all visitor-facing activities, ensuring they support Burghley's heritage, educational, charitable and commercial objectives.

Leading Visitor Services, Learning and Education, Retail, Catering and Hospitality, Security and Site Management and associated visitor operations, the role will ensure a seamless and engaging visitor journey while protecting the long-term stewardship, reputation and sustainability of the estate.

This is not a traditional custodial or facilities-focused operations role. We are seeking a contemporary visitor experience leader who understands the expectations of modern audiences and can successfully balance heritage conservation, public engagement and commercial performance. The successful candidate will combine operational credibility, strategic thinking, commercial acumen and emotional intelligence to drive innovation, continuous improvement and organisational resilience.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership

- Lead the development and delivery of Burghley's visitor operations strategy. Paying specific attention to enhancing and growing our Learning & Education offer in the short to medium term.
- Contribute to organisational strategy, business planning and long-term sustainability as a member of the senior leadership team.
- Translate strategic objectives into operational plans, budgets and performance measures.

- Champion visitor experience, accessibility, inclusion and public engagement across the organisation.
- Lead organisational change and continuous improvement initiatives.

Operational Leadership

Provide strategic oversight of:

- Visitor Services
- Learning and Education
- Retail
- Catering and Hospitality
- Security and Fire salvage
- Gardens

Ensuring effective collaboration, communication and integration across all operational areas.

Visitor Experience

- Ensure the delivery of an outstanding visitor experience across all visitor touchpoints.
- Demonstrate a deep understanding of visitor behaviour, audience needs and customer journeys.
- Work alongside Marketing Director to drive innovation in interpretation, learning, digital engagement and visitor programming.
- Using visitor insight, data and feedback to inform decision-making and service improvements.
- And ensuring visitor experiences are welcoming, accessible, educational, emotionally engaging and aligned with the Burghley brand.

People Leadership

- Lead, develop and inspire all visitor facing teams.
- Foster a positive, inclusive and high-performing culture.
- Promote accountability, collaboration and service excellence.
- Support workforce planning, succession planning, recruitment and professional development.
- Act as a visible and approachable leader, maintaining strong connections with frontline teams.

Commercial Performance

- Lead operational budget management, income generation and cost control.

- Identify and develop new revenue opportunities aligned with Burghley's mission and visitor offer.
- Balance commercial performance with visitor satisfaction, heritage stewardship and organisational values.
- Monitor performance through data, KPIs and operational reporting and utilise for effective and agile forecasting and resource planning.

Risk, Safety and Compliance

- Act as senior lead for visitor safety, security and operational risk management.
- Ensure compliance with all relevant health and safety, safeguarding, licensing, food safety and security requirements.
- Work with Head Porter to ensure effective incident response, emergency planning and business continuity arrangements.
- Work collaboratively across the estate to ensure a consistent and effective approach to risk management.

External Relationships

- Represent Burghley within the heritage, tourism and visitor attraction sectors and build productive relationships with sector bodies, partners, funders and stakeholders.
 - Manage external contracts and service providers where required.
 - Promote Burghley's reputation as a leading heritage destination.
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Person Specification

Essential Experience

- Significant leadership experience within a visitor-facing organisation.
- Proven experience leading multi-functional operations with competing priorities, servicing substantial visitor numbers.
- Demonstrable experience delivering organisational change and service transformation.
- Strong commercial and financial management experience, including budget responsibility and income generation.
- Experience leading and developing large, diverse teams.
- Strong understanding of visitor experience, customer service and public engagement.

- Experience using data, insight and performance measures to inform strategic and operational decision-making.
- Strong knowledge of health and safety, risk management and compliance within public environments.
- Excellent communication, influencing and stakeholder management skills.

Desirable Experience

- Experience within a heritage, cultural, museum, leisure or tourism environment.
- Experience overseeing learning and education programmes.
- Experience leading retail and hospitality operations.
- Experience working within listed buildings or conservation-sensitive environments.
- Knowledge of sustainable operational practices and environmental responsibility.

Knowledge and Skills

The successful candidate will demonstrate:

- A strong understanding of contemporary visitor expectations and audience engagement.
- Knowledge of customer journey mapping, visitor flow management, customer segmentation and visitor behaviour.
- Experience of ticketing systems, CRM platforms, visitor analytics and digital booking journeys.
- Confidence using operational dashboards, workforce management systems and reporting tools.
- Understanding of digital visitor engagement and emerging technologies, including the opportunities and risks presented by AI.
- Strong project and change management capability, including stakeholder engagement and implementation planning.
- Ability to combine strategic thinking with operational delivery.

Leadership Attributes

We are seeking a leader who is:

- Visitor-focused and audience-led
- Commercially aware and strategically minded

- Adaptable, innovative and improvement-focused
- Emotionally intelligent and highly collaborative
- Calm, decisive and credible under pressure
- Inclusive, approachable and people-centred
- Accountable and results-driven
- Passionate about heritage, learning and public engagement

The successful candidate will lead with integrity, professionalism and authenticity, ensuring that operational excellence, visitor experience and commercial sustainability work together to support Burghley's long-term success.

Process

If you would like to apply for the role, please send your CV and covering letter, including salary expectations, to recruitment@burghley.co.uk by 2nd August.

If your salary, or industry experience, fall outside of the above but you believe you have the skills, experience, and capability to fulfil our role, please still feel free to apply.

We welcome applications from individuals of underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds. Burghley is an Equal Opportunity Employer.