

Role: Aberdeenshire West Operations Manager	Region / Department: North East
Reports to: Regional Director – North East	Pay Band: Grade 5 Upper - £47,983 - £53,128 Per Annum
Location: ABW Properties Castle Fraser / Leith Hall / Craigievar Castle	Type of Contract: 40 Hours Per Week, Permanent

JOB PURPOSE

A visible and senior management role where, in addition to the general operations management of the properties in pursuit of their aims and objectives, the post holder will be responsible for the development of the property operating business planning process (working with the Property teams and Business Manager for the region who oversees this process) and utilising key sources of information and needs (e.g. conservation management plan; visitor/market research) to present effective and accountable business plans which underpin the properties financial performances, visitor experience, conservation delivery, reputation and maintenance. The post is based at Castle Fraser and reports to the Regional Director for the North East region.

CONTEXT

The Aberdeenshire West cluster includes the properties of Castle Fraser, Leith Hall and Craigievar Castle. Combined, these important properties contribute 175k visitors per annum to the NE region.

Castle Fraser is one of Scotland's largest tower houses and contains an impressive collection of portraits which include a Raeburn. Dating back to 1450 this impressive castle offers the visitor guided tours, holiday accommodation, catering, retail, weddings and corporate function space, walled garden and extensive parkland for walks.

Craigievar Castle or the 'pink castle' was said to be the inspiration for Walt Disney's Cinderella Castle. Recently refurbished the castle provides visitors with guided tours of the castles armour, art and history. The castle grounds boast incredible wildlife and extensive woodland trails. Events and functions are held at the property throughout the year and income is supported through retail and catering offers.

Built in 1650, Leith Hall was home to the Leith-Hay family. The house was donated to the Trust just after WW2 with all furnishings and art, making it one of the Trust's most complete collections in its care. The House offers events and function opportunities with retail and catering supporting income generation. An impressive garden – the highest altitude within the Trust – and walks within the estate helps to support and draw visitor footfall to the site.

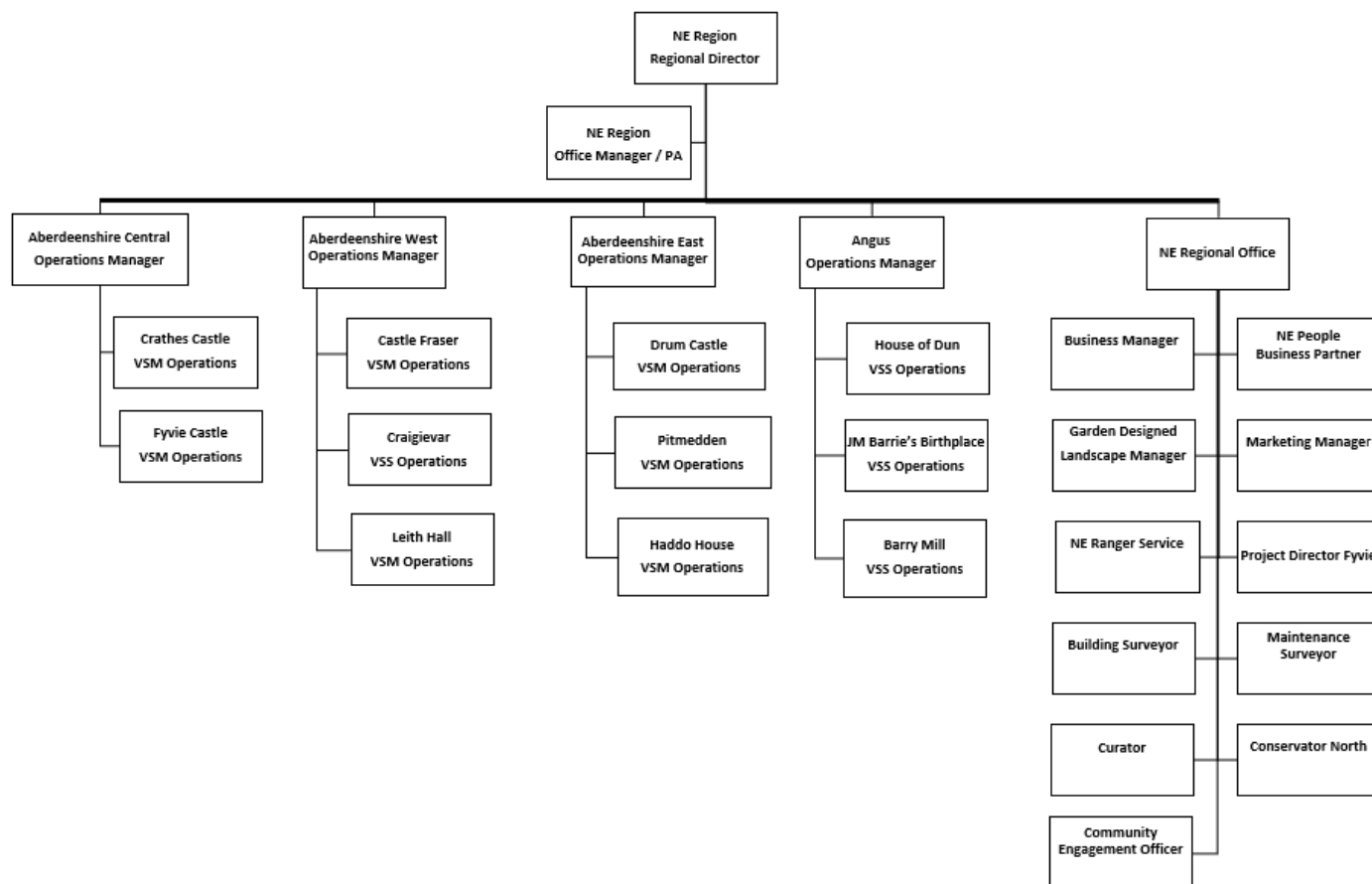
The Aberdeenshire West Operations Manager will be constantly and consistently leading the development of visitor services excellence, commercial and enterprising activity and change, ensuring place and content is engaging through interpretation and services and is the general custodian of its conservation and educational obligations.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITIES

Enterprise and trading - The business leader for the property, working with the support of the visitor services supervisors and regional management team will plan and deliver innovative product and sales opportunities, integrated with the heritage sites and particular visitor profile for that property / market.

People Management - Enabling the Property teams to optimise the current visitor experience, conservation delivery, and financial performance in line with the properties current Annual Operating Plans. Coaches and mentors' property teams and staff who directly report to the post to ensure they are fully equipped and motivated to undertake their duties to the required Trust standards, policies, rules, values, delegated authorities and objectives. Succession planning amongst staff and levels of responsibilities and other key posts within the property.

NE Region Structure



Promoting Heritage - Supports and coaches property staff to develop and promote their properties use and potential as a life-long learning resource, in line with the Trust's 'Education Principles' and as part of its charitable aims (Access, Learning and Enjoyment).

Marketing, Membership and Supporter Development - drives business development and marketing of the property to maximise income generation. Working as part of a coordinated regional team and planning agenda, working with *Customer and Cause* colleagues centrally to optimise the visibility and promotion of the property.

Financial Management, Compliance and Scheme of Delegation - Responsible for budget preparation and day-to-day financial performance. Working closely with the Business Manager to devise effective plans, objectives and solutions and monitor performance (financial, project delivery, initiatives). Taking corrective action required and ensures that the property remains within budget and acts within delegated financial authorities, wider schemes of delegation and adheres to Trust rules, policies and procedures.

Project Management - The Operations Manager maintains an overview of project conception; prioritisation, approvals and delivery within the properties and for ensuring staff within the property operate within NTS Project Management rules. In most cases, capital projects will involve a Project Manager appointed specifically to the project, directed by and supporting the Operations Manager. The Business Manager oversees project processes and resourcing and acts as a supporting role in the management of Projects.

Health, Safety and the Environment - Undertakes responsibility under the Health and Safety Policy including convening and chairing a group Health and Safety forum if applicable. Ensure effective support is achieved from Health and Safety advisors / coordinators assigned to the region and ensures property staff and volunteers adhere to their obligations in line with stated Trust systems, policies, procedures and approaches to ensure the health, safety and environment under the Health and Safety policy and their job description.

Strategic Development of the NTS - Champions and supports the strategic development of the Trust, through participation in national initiatives, projects and working group activity as required and appropriate.

Championing and Advocacy/Stakeholder Engagement - The Operations Manager supports property teams in maintaining positive and productive relations with local communities, tourism, culture, arts and heritage bodies and stakeholders. Support the teams to seek out new productive relations, whether locally or more widely for the benefit of the property. Act as an external networker and advocate for the properties, with membership of appropriate external bodies in the geographical area, or through the regional management team.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS, SKILLS, EXPERIENCE & KNOWLEDGE

Qualifications

Essential

- Graduate or equivalent essential; qualification in business management, e.g. (MBA)
- A full, clean driving license for driving in the UK is essential.
- Criminal records (Disclosure Scotland) checking and clearance essential.

Experience

Essential

- Extensive experience in managing a large-scale visitor attraction.
- Direct experience of property management where customer services and trading are primary features (e.g. retailing, hospitality, foods, and leisure).
- Responsibility for operating revenue budgets.
- Significant team management, mentoring, facilitating and coaching experience. Formal operational management training within services environment desirable.
- Demonstrable experience of business development and business planning, notably: revenue development, partnerships and affinities, new trading, concept development, change management.
- Effective stakeholder management experience, notable examples: media, local government.
- Line management experience of staff groups, including supervisory staff.
- Demonstrable experience of managing Health and Safety in the work place; formal training or personal development in this area desirable.

- Experience of responsibility for marketing and promotional planning and delivery, or participation in marketing and promotional initiatives – desirable.

Desirable

- Heritage sector experience highly desirable.
- Effective direct experience of multi-site or single site operational management where landscapes, nature conservation, environment or estates management is apparent.

DIMENSIONS AND SCOPE OF JOB

People Management

- ♦ The Operations Managers leads a team of Visitor Services Staff, Gardeners, and volunteers.

Finance Management

- ♦ The Operations Manager is the budget holder for Castle Fraser, Leith Hall and Craigievar Castle and is responsible and accountable for the performance management of £902k income and £1.5m of expenditure.
- ♦ Retail turnover for 2025/26 budgeted at £162k and catering turnover at £238k.

Tools / equipment / systems

- Laptop, mobile telephone and access to relevant IT systems, i.e. standard NTS management systems including Intranet, SharePoint, EPOS.

Key Performance indicators and targets

- ♦ Delivery of the Property Annual Operating Plan in line with the regional and organization strategies.
- ♦ Project Management.
- ♦ Financial management in relation to budgeting and forecasting of both revenue and capital performance.
- ♦ Engaging and development of stakeholder relationships.
- ♦ Responsibility for the day-to-day Health & Safety and Environmental Health management at the properties.
- ♦ Responsibility for staff induction, motivation, development, and performance management.

The Key Responsibilities, Scope of Job, and Required Qualifications, Skills, Experience & Knowledge reflect the requirements of the job at the time of issue. The Trust reserves the right to amend these with appropriate consultation and/or request the post-holder to undertake any activities that it believes to be reasonable within the broad scope of the job or general abilities.

How to Apply

Interested applicants should forward their Curriculum Vitae (CV) or an Application Form to the People Services Department (Applications) by email via workforus@nts.org.uk by Sunday 15th June 2025.

Please ensure your CV includes your full name and contact details, the CV file sent to us should be titled your first initial and surname. When submitting your CV please state the position and job location of the vacancy you are applying for in the subject title or body of your email: For example, "Operations Manager – Aberdeenshire West"