



**North East
Learning Trust**

PAYROLL OFFICER

Applicant information pack

Payroll Officer

Permanent

Grade 5 SCP18 – SCP22

£32,578– £34,811 (FTE)

Full-time, part-time and flexible working options considered
Up to 37 hours per week, Monday to Friday

Working for North East Learning Trust means joining one of the most successful and ambitious education trusts in the country and one of the largest school networks in the region. Our shared vision is that every child experiences excellence every day. As a growing Trust of 15 schools, supporting around 1,300 staff through two payrolls, our central services play a vital role in ensuring schools are well supported and staff receive an accurate, timely and responsive payroll service.

We are seeking a proactive, technically confident and customer-focused Payroll Officer to support the delivery and continuous improvement of a reliable, compliant and modern payroll service across the Trust. This is an exciting opportunity to apply payroll expertise in a complex education setting, supporting schools with differing support staff and teacher terms and conditions, term-time working calculations, statutory and occupational payments, and Local Government Pension Scheme and Teachers' Pension Scheme requirements.

The Trust is continuing to modernise its payroll services, with employee and manager self-service helping to streamline workflows, reduce manual processes and make payroll information more accessible. The Payroll Officer will help embed and improve these ways of working, using payroll knowledge, system confidence and strong customer service to make payroll easier, clearer and more responsive for schools, staff and managers.

This role will also support the Trust's managed growth strategy, including the onboarding of transferring schools and the smooth integration of staff records, payroll data, pension arrangements and local working practices into Trust systems. It offers a unique challenge for someone who understands the specialist nature of education payroll and wants to contribute to services that support education, school leadership and staff wellbeing.

We welcome applications from candidates seeking full-time or part-time working arrangements. Our priority is to appoint the right person with the payroll expertise, accuracy and customer focus needed for the role. Working patterns can be discussed at interview, subject to payroll deadline cover, service continuity and effective support for schools and employees.

You will join:

- A growing Trust with a clear vision for education, school improvement and managed growth
- A central team that values accurate, responsive and customer-focused support for schools and staff
- A positive and caring ethos where colleagues are valued and supported
- A team of hardworking, dedicated and friendly staff committed to making a difference

We can offer:

- Full-time, part-time and flexible working options considered, subject to payroll service needs.



- National Terms and Conditions of Employment — NJC Green Book
- Access to the Local Government Pension Scheme
- Generous annual leave entitlement of 32 days, plus 8 public holidays
- One paid wellbeing day per year
- Free on-site car parking
- Lifestyle savings and discounts from leading retail brands
- Discounted gym membership
- Employee Assistance Programme offering free confidential advice and counselling services for staff and family members

You will:

- Bring strong payroll experience, ideally in education, schools, local government or another complex public sector setting.
- Understand education payroll, including term-time calculations, statutory payments, pensions, payroll compliance and differing terms and conditions.
- Confidently process, check and reconcile payroll data across two payrolls.
- Use payroll and system knowledge to improve processes and support effective employee and manager self-service.
- Communicate clearly with employees, schools, HR, Finance, pension providers and external contacts, taking a proactive and customer-focused approach.

Deadline: 12th October 2026 (9am)

Application packs and further information can be downloaded from our website. Please complete the Trust application form and ensure your application clearly demonstrates how your experience, skills and knowledge meet the requirements of the role.

Completed application forms should be returned to humanresources@nelt.co.uk or by post to Human Resources, North East Learning Trust, Traynor House, Traynor Way, Whitehouse Business Park, Peterlee, SR8 2RU. Candidates may submit a cover letter to support their application; CVs will not be accepted instead of a completed application form.

North East Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff to share this commitment. This post is subject to satisfactory pre-employment checks, including enhanced DBS disclosure, medical clearance, references and any other checks required in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education and the Trust's Safeguarding Policy, which is available on our website.



Job description

Post title:	Payroll Officer
Responsible to:	Finance & Payroll Manager
Responsible for:	Payroll processing, pension administration, self-service support, payroll reporting, and maintaining HR/payroll records across the Trust.
Salary Band:	Grade 5 SCP18 – SCP22

Job Purpose:

To contribute to the accurate, timely and compliant delivery of the Trust's payroll service in a complex education setting. Apply payroll knowledge to process, check and reconcile payroll changes and support pension and statutory administration. Maintain accurate HR/payroll records, resolve routine payroll queries, strengthen payroll controls and contribute to improvements in customer service, employee and manager self-service, and payroll management information.

Duties and responsibilities:

Payroll processing and controls:

- Process, check and reconcile payroll transactions accurately and on time, including new starters, leavers, contract changes, salary amendments, additional hours, overtime, allowances, deductions and other pay adjustments.
- Apply knowledge of education payroll arrangements, including support staff and teacher terms and conditions, term-time working calculations, pay awards, occupational payments and statutory payments.
- Review payroll information received from schools, HR and managers to ensure it is complete, accurate, authorised and ready for processing.
- Prepare and review payroll validation reports, exception checks and reconciliations to support accurate monthly payroll processing and early identification of errors.
- Identify, calculate and support the correction of payroll errors, including underpayments and overpayments, escalating significant, sensitive or policy-related matters as required.
- Maintain accurate payroll records and supporting documentation to provide a clear audit trail for payroll transactions, month-end routines, year-end processes and statutory reporting.
- Prepare payroll reports for Finance, HR and school stakeholders as required, supporting clearer payroll information and better-informed workforce decisions.

Pensions and statutory administration:

- Maintain accurate pension records and support pension administration for starters, leavers, contractual changes, contribution queries and routine monthly pension activity.
- Support Local Government Pension Scheme and Teachers' Pension Scheme administration, including pension data checks, returns, correspondence and escalation of complex or high-risk pension matters.
- Process statutory deductions and third-party payments accurately, including PAYE, National Insurance, court orders, attachment of earnings, salary sacrifice and other approved deductions.

- Apply current payroll, HMRC and pension scheme requirements when processing statutory and occupational payments, recognising the complexity of education payroll, term-time working and varied terms and conditions.
- Prepare accurate payroll and pension information for statutory, pension and third-party reporting, ensuring records are complete, traceable and submitted in line with required deadlines.

Payroll systems, self-service and process improvement:

- Maintain accurate payroll and pension data within the Trust's HR/payroll systems, in line with authorised documentation and agreed procedures.
- Support effective employee and manager self-service to streamline workflows, reduce manual processing and improve access to payroll information.
- Produce payroll and system reports to support checking, reconciliation, query resolution, management information and service improvement.
- Respond to routine system and self-service queries, escalating access, configuration or technical issues as appropriate.
- Contribute to system testing, pay award updates, workflow changes and process redesign, ensuring changes are accurate, practical and understood by users.
- Identify opportunities to make payroll services clearer for staff, more accessible for managers and more efficient for the Finance and Payroll team.

Payroll queries and customer service:

- Manage the payroll inbox and respond to employee, school, HR, Finance, pension provider and external queries promptly, professionally and confidentially.
- Investigate payroll queries by reviewing records, source documents and system data, escalating complex or sensitive matters where required.
- Provide clear and accurate guidance on pay changes, deductions, payslips, absence-related pay, term-time working, pensions and payroll deadlines.
- Maintain a customer-focused service, recognising that payroll issues can be sensitive and may have a direct financial impact on employees.
- Work with HR, Finance and school colleagues to resolve issues, improve payroll submissions and support a consistent service across all schools.

Growth, onboarding and transition support:

- Support the onboarding of transferring schools into the Trust's payroll arrangements, including the review and migration of employee records, pay details, pension information and local working practices.
- Work with HR, Finance, school leaders and external providers to support smooth payroll transitions and a positive employee experience during school transfers.
- Contribute payroll knowledge to due diligence, transition planning and implementation activity linked to the Trust's managed growth strategy.
- Help standardise payroll processes while recognising the complexity of different terms and conditions, pension arrangements and school-level practices.

Compliance, audit and reporting:

- Complete payroll activity in line with Trust policies, statutory requirements, data protection obligations and agreed payroll procedures.
- Maintain accurate records, reconciliations and supporting evidence to support internal controls, segregation of duties and audit requirements.
- Assist with audit queries, compliance checks, payroll reviews and information requests, escalating issues to the Finance & Payroll Manager where required.

General responsibilities:

- Build effective working relationships with schools, HR, Finance, pension providers and other payroll-related contacts.
- Maintain up-to-date knowledge of payroll, pension, statutory, education-sector and system changes relevant to the role.
- Work flexibly within the payroll function to support busy periods, payroll deadlines, school onboarding activity and service continuity.
- Undertake other duties and responsibilities relevant to the nature, level and scope of the post.

The duties and responsibilities in this job description are indicative and may vary over time. Postholders are expected to undertake other duties relevant to the nature, level and extent of the post, and the grade has been established on this basis.

Health and safety:

All employees are responsible for taking reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their actions at work. This includes cooperating with the Trust, following health and safety procedures, maintaining a safe working environment and reporting defects, risks or potential hazards promptly.

Safeguarding:

The Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All staff are expected to share this commitment, comply with the Trust's safeguarding policies and procedures, attend appropriate training, report concerns to the Designated Safeguarding Lead and record safeguarding concerns appropriately.

Person specification

Payroll Officer

	Essential	Desirable
Education/training	- GCSEs grade 9–4, A*–C, or equivalent, including English and Maths. - Payroll qualification, or substantial payroll experience demonstrating equivalent technical knowledge. - Commitment to maintaining up-to-date payroll, pension, statutory and system knowledge.	- CIPP, AAT, payroll technician qualification or equivalent relevant qualification. - IT, finance, HR or business administration qualification.
Experience	- Strong experience of working in payroll, with responsibility for accurate processing, checking and deadline delivery. - Experience of investigating payroll queries and resolving routine and moderately complex pay-related issues. - Experience of maintaining confidential employee records and handling sensitive information securely. - Experience of using payroll, HR, finance or business systems to maintain records, run reports and support reconciliations. - Experience of supporting payroll controls, validation reports, audit checks, year-end routines or reconciliations.	- Experience of education, schools, local government, academy trusts or another complex public sector payroll environment. - Experience of iTrent or a similar integrated HR/payroll system, including employee self-service or manager self-service functionality. - Experience of term-time working calculations, education pay arrangements, multiple contract types or multiple terms and conditions. - Experience of pension administration, including LGPS and/or Teachers' Pension Scheme processes. - Experience of onboarding new schools, transferring staff groups or system transitions.
Knowledge	- Strong working knowledge of payroll processes, statutory deductions, payroll deadlines, reconciliations and payroll controls. - Understanding of PAYE, National Insurance, statutory payments, occupational payments and payroll-related deductions. - Understanding of confidentiality, data protection, audit trails and secure handling of employee payroll information. - Understanding of how payroll systems and employee self-service can improve workflows, reduce manual processes and improve access to information.	- Knowledge of NJC Green Book and teachers' terms and conditions. - Knowledge of term-time only calculations, annualised pay, education allowances or multiple contract types. - Knowledge of LGPS and/or Teachers' Pension Scheme administration. - Knowledge of academy trust, school or public sector payroll processes. - Awareness of HMRC payroll reporting requirements and payroll year-end processes.

	Essential	Desirable
Skills and Aptitude	• Excellent numerical accuracy and attention to detail. • Strong analytical skills, with the ability to identify payroll discrepancies, investigate causes and take appropriate corrective action. • Strong organisational skills, with the ability to manage competing deadlines across multiple schools and payroll cycles. • Good Excel and Microsoft Office skills, with confidence using payroll reports and system data. • Clear written and verbal communication skills, including the ability to explain payroll matters to non-specialists. • Ability to work methodically and maintain accuracy during periods of pressure, interruption or changing priorities. • Ability to contribute to process improvement and the effective use of employee and manager self-service • Ability to work independently on allocated responsibilities while escalating high-risk, complex or policy-related matters appropriately	• Intermediate Excel skills, including filters, lookups, formulas or reconciliations. • Ability to support system testing, workflow improvement, data migration or payroll implementation activity. • Experience of preparing payroll information for management, audit, pension or statutory reporting.
Personal qualities	• Professional, reliable and discreet when handling confidential information. • Customer-focused and able to communicate sensitively with employees about pay-related matters. • Proactive and solution-focused, with confidence applying payroll knowledge to complex or non-standard cases. • Able to build positive working relationships with schools, HR, Finance, employees and external contacts. • Flexible and resilient, with the ability to support payroll deadlines, school onboarding and service improvement activity. • Committed to the Trust's values and to improving payroll services for schools, staff and managers.	

References:

References will be requested prior to interview, except for non-teaching roles where there are exceptional circumstances, and the applicant does not give consent to do so on the application form. Offer of employment will be subject to receipt of satisfactory references.

DBS:

North East 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.

Pre-occupational health:

Pre-occupational health checks are an essential part of the selection and recruitment process to assess if any reasonable adjustments are required.

Equal opportunities:

We 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 who meet the essential criteria for the role will be offered an interview, in line with the Trust's recruitment commitments.

