



RECRUITMENT PACK

Head of Centre

Salary	£40,000–£50,000 plus bonus scheme
Contract	Full time, term time only
Location	OpenGate Education Tees Valley Site
Reports to	Justin Lewis, Director of Operations
Travel	Full driving license, occasional travel between sites

Help a young person take the next achievable step towards learning.

Welcome to OpenGate Education

We are building an alternative provision offer around the young person, not asking the young person to fit a standard model.

OpenGate Education provides high-quality, responsive alternative provision for children and young people who need a different route to engage, progress and succeed. We work closely with schools, local authorities, families and other professionals to deliver flexible support built around individual need, strong safeguarding and measurable outcomes.

What matters to us

- **Young people first.** We listen carefully, respond to individual need and keep progress meaningful to the young person.
- **Relationships with purpose.** Trust is the starting point, but every relationship is used thoughtfully to help a learner move forward.
- **High expectations with flexibility.** We adapt the route without losing sight of positive destinations and ambitious outcomes.

- **Partnership.** We work openly with families, schools, commissioners and other professionals because sustainable progress is shared work.
- **Safe, reflective practice.** Safeguarding, professional boundaries, accurate recording and supervision underpin everything we do.

The opportunity

You will join OpenGate at an exciting stage of development, with the opportunity to influence how our re-engagement service grows. You will have the freedom to use creativity, practical activities and community opportunities while working within clear safeguarding, quality and outcome frameworks.

Why work for us

We want people to feel well supported, recognised and able to build a long-term career with OpenGate Education.

- **Health and wellbeing prioritised.** A culture that treats staff wellbeing, safe workloads, good supervision and open conversations as essential to high-quality work with family friendly policies to support you.
- **Wellbeing days.** Dedicated wellbeing days to support rest, reflection and sustainable practice.
- **Discounts and perks.** Access to employee discounts and practical perks as part of our developing staff offer.
- **Rewards and retention.** Reward and retention initiatives that recognise commitment and support people to build their future with us.
- **Team recognition rewards.** Regular opportunities to celebrate excellent practice, contribution and the difference colleagues make.
- **Professional development.** Role-relevant training, reflective practice and development opportunities shaped around the work you do.
- **Grow your own career.** We want to invest in people and create genuine routes for progression, including promotion from within as OpenGate grows.
- **Staff uniform.** A practical OpenGate uniform will be provided for a consistent, professional identity when working in the community.
- **Company pension.** Access to a workplace pension in line with the scheme rules and statutory eligibility.
- **High quality environments with small class sizes.** We pride ourselves on individual support for our young people.
- **A rewarding workplace where you will be responsible for positive outcomes.** Our pathways look at future career aspirations and directly feed into our local communities, changing the lives for our young people.

What you can expect from us

- A clear induction and the guidance needed to work safely and confidently in community settings.
- Regular supervision, opportunities for reflective practice and access to leadership support.
- A collaborative team where ideas from frontline practice help shape the service.
- Clear expectations, purposeful plans and a shared focus on evidence of progress.

Who should apply

We welcome applicants with different professional backgrounds. What matters most is your ability to build trust, work safely and help young people make purposeful progress.

Your experience could come from

- Mainstream, AP, PRU or SEND schools
- Current or previous leadership experience in an education environment
- Leading a department in a Secondary school

You may be a strong fit if you

- Can connect with a young person who is reluctant to engage or has stopped trusting education.
- Stay calm, dependable with professional boundaries when progress is slow or plans change.
- Can turn a young person's interests into purposeful activities and achievable next steps.
- Are confident working independently, while knowing when to seek guidance or escalate a concern.
- Communicate well with families and professionals and keep clear, accurate records.
- Believe inclusion should be ambitious, practical and centered on better long-term outcomes.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Head of Centre

Leading an inclusive alternative provision and delivering inspiring teaching

Organisation	<i>OpenGate Education</i>
Salary	40-50k plus bonus scheme
Contract	Full time, term time only
Reporting to	Justin Lewis, Director of Operations
Location	OpenGate Education site in Tees Valley, with occasional travel as required

About OpenGate Education

OpenGate Education provides high-quality, responsive alternative provision for children and young people who need a different route to engage, progress and succeed. We work closely with schools, local authorities, families and other professionals to deliver flexible support built around individual need, strong safeguarding and measurable outcomes.

Role purpose

The Head of Centre will lead the day-to-day running of an OpenGate Education provision, creating a safe, welcoming and purposeful environment where young people can rebuild confidence, reconnect with learning and achieve meaningful outcomes. Working with the Directors, the postholder will help establish and develop the site, lead its team and ensure that each placement is purposeful, personalised and responsive to need.

There will be an expectation for the successful candidate to teach elements of the curriculum where required. Alongside the site leadership, the postholder will plan and deliver timetabled lessons to small groups and

individual learners in their subject specialism and other agreed areas within their competence. The teaching allocation will be agreed with the Director of Operations and reviewed as learner numbers and the staffing team develops, with protected time for leadership, safeguarding, planning and quality assurance.

Key responsibilities

Site leadership and development

- Lead daily site operations, setting clear expectations for safety, inclusion, teaching, attendance and professional conduct.
- Work with the Directors to prepare the site for opening, establish routines and support the induction of staff and learners.
- Translate organisational priorities into a practical site improvement plan, reviewing progress and addressing emerging risks.
- Coordinate staffing, timetables, cover and resources to meet learner needs and maintain safe, effective delivery.
- Work with the Director of Business on premises, resources, budgets and health and safety, escalating issues promptly.
- Contribute to organisational growth, commissioner assurance and preparations for future registration where required.

Teaching and curriculum delivery

- Ensure the high quality planning and teaching of engaging, well-sequenced lessons for small groups and individual learners.
- Ensure teaching team use initial assessments to identify starting points, gaps in learning and appropriate academic, vocational and personal development goals.
- Ensure teaching team adapt resources and assessment for SEND, SEMH needs, disrupted education and differing levels of literacy and numeracy.
- Deliver teaching in an agreed subject specialism and contribute to Functional Skills, PSHE, enrichment or other curriculum areas where appropriately skilled.
- Connect classroom learning with practical, vocational and outdoor experiences, helping learners understand its relevance to their future.
- Assess learning, provide constructive feedback and maintain accurate evidence of progress and achievement.
- Model as site lead effective classroom practice, clear routines and relational approaches that build confidence and readiness to learn.

Quality of education and learner progress

- Oversee a coherent, personalised curriculum that balances learning, qualifications, wellbeing and preparation for next steps.
- Ensure learners have clear plans linked to referral objectives, assessment findings and relevant EHCP outcomes.
- Review teaching, learner work and progress through proportionate quality assurance, coaching and constructive feedback.
- Use attendance, engagement, assessment and destination information to identify gaps and improve provision.
- Coordinate learner reviews and timely reports for families, schools and commissioners, showing progress against agreed outcomes.
- Work with awarding bodies and colleagues to support appropriate qualification delivery, assessment and quality assurance.

Safeguarding, welfare and positive behaviour

- Embed a safeguarding culture in which staff recognise concerns, act promptly and maintain accurate records and professional boundaries.

- Work closely with the organisational safeguarding lead and fulfil site-level DSL responsibilities if formally appointed and appropriately trained.
- Ensure clear safeguarding escalation routes and suitable DSL cover during teaching, absence and off-site activities.
- Oversee learner, activity and location risk assessments and ensure that staff understand and implement agreed controls.
- Lead consistent, relational and restorative approaches to behaviour, using de-escalation and individual support plans.
- Monitor attendance and absence concerns, coordinating follow-up and support with families and referring schools.
- Coordinate responses to incidents, complaints and welfare concerns within delegated authority, escalating to the Directors as required.

Staff leadership and partnership working

- Lead, support and line-manage site staff, providing clear objectives, regular supervision and development opportunities.
- Build a collaborative team culture with consistent routines, effective communication and high expectations for learners.
- Contribute to recruitment, induction, appraisal and the identification of staff training needs.
- Work with schools, local authorities, families and professionals to assess referral suitability and plan safe, achievable placements.
- Coordinate induction, transition and reintegration plans, maintaining clear responsibilities with the referring school or commissioner.
- Work with outreach colleagues to support young people moving from community-based engagement into site-based learning.
- Maintain accurate records and handle information securely in line with organisational procedures.

Key relationships

- Young people, parents and carers
- Director of Operations, Director of Business and organisational safeguarding lead
- Teachers, vocational tutors, support staff, outreach practitioners and operations colleagues
- Schools, local authorities, commissioners, SEND teams and virtual schools
- Social care, early help, health professionals, awarding bodies and delivery partners

Person specification

Essential experience and knowledge

- Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and a relevant degree or equivalent qualification.
- Successful teaching experience with secondary-age learners, including young people with SEND, SEMH needs or barriers to education.
- Experience of leading a team, curriculum area, pastoral function or education provision and supporting colleagues to improve practice.
- Ability to plan, teach and assess an agreed subject or curriculum area and adapt learning for varied starting points.
- A sound understanding of safeguarding, professional boundaries and the responsibilities of education staff.
- Understanding of inclusive curriculum planning, positive behaviour support and approaches to improving attendance and engagement.

- Experience of working with families, schools and other professionals to plan support and review outcomes.
- Good written communication, digital confidence and the ability to use records and data to inform decisions.

Desirable experience and knowledge

- Experience of alternative provision, specialist education, reintegration or establishing a new provision.
- Experience as a head of site, deputy, assistant head, SENCO or other education leader.
- DSL experience and relevant safeguarding training, or readiness to complete this before taking on designated responsibilities.
- Experience of teaching Functional Skills, vocational qualifications or a broad, personalised curriculum.
- Experience of working with EHCPs, emotionally based school avoidance and neurodivergent young people.
- Knowledge of trauma-informed, relational and restorative practice.
- Experience of commissioner reviews, external quality assurance or preparations for school registration.

Skills and personal qualities

- Able to combine visible, supportive leadership with effective hands-on teaching.
- Calm, dependable and able to make sound decisions when priorities compete.
- Able to build trust with young people who may have lost confidence in education.
- Organised and proactive, with the ability to balance teaching, staff leadership and operational demands.
- Able to challenge constructively, hold colleagues accountable and support their development.
- Committed to inclusion, ambitious outcomes and listening to young people and families.
- Flexible and resourceful, with an appetite for helping to shape a new provision.

Measures of success

- The site operates safely with clear routines, effective safeguarding arrangements and consistent staff practice.
- Learners access suitable personalised programmes and make evidenced progress in learning, engagement and confidence.
- The Head of Site delivers effective teaching while maintaining sufficient capacity for leadership responsibilities.
- Teaching quality improves through review, coaching and relevant professional development.
- Attendance, placement stability and successful transitions improve against individual starting points and agreed goals.
- Families, schools and commissioners receive reliable communication and clear evidence of impact.
- The team is well supported and site improvement actions are delivered.

Additional requirements

- The teaching allocation and curriculum responsibilities will be agreed before appointment and reviewed with the Director of Operations.
- The role requires a regular on-site presence and flexibility to attend relevant meetings, training and occasional off-site activities.
- Appointment will be subject to appropriate safer recruitment and pre-employment checks, including an enhanced DBS check, satisfactory references, identity, right-to-work and relevant qualification checks.
- The postholder must complete required training and follow organisational safeguarding, data protection and health and safety procedures.
- The duties listed are not exhaustive. The postholder may be expected to undertake other reasonable duties consistent with the level and purpose of the role.

OpenGate Education is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people. All staff are expected to share this commitment and to report concerns immediately in accordance with OpenGate Education's safeguarding procedures.