GROUNDWORK
CHANGING PLACES
CHANGING LIVES

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE:	Lead Chef Land of Oak & Iron Heritage Centre
REPORTS TO:	Trading Company Manager
REPONSIBLE FOR:	Kitchen/Catering Staff
LOCATION:	Land of Oak & Iron Heritage Centre, Spa Well Rd (A694), Winlaton Mill, NE21 6RU
HOURS:	37 Hours per week, including regular weekend working, with flexibility to meet the operational needs of the Heritage Centre.

JOB SUMMARY

The Lead Chef is responsible for leading the day-to-day kitchen and food operations at the Land of Oak & Iron Heritage Centre. This includes developing and preparing fresh, high-quality food for the café and catering service, leading the development and costing of menus, ensuring full compliance with food safety regulations, and managing kitchen operations, stock and kitchen staff.

This is a hands-on cooking and kitchen leadership role, with ownership of the food offer and day-to-day kitchen operation. The Lead Chef will proactively develop menu ideas and prepare costings, working with the Trading Company Manager on pricing, budgets and wider commercial performance, and will work collaboratively with the Front of House team to support an excellent overall customer experience.

The Lead Chef is supported by the Trading Company Manager for wider people management, business planning and strategic decisions.

KEY TASKS

Catering Operations & Food Production

- Lead the day-to-day operation of the café kitchen and catering services.
- Prepare and cook a range of fresh food including sandwiches, soups, cakes, baked goods and hot meals.
- Develop and deliver seasonal menus and food offers, including recipe costing and pricing recommendations.
- Ensure food is prepared, presented and served to consistently high standards.
- Plan and deliver catering requirements for meetings, events, functions and other Heritage Centre activities.
- Work collaboratively with colleagues to ensure catering services meet customer and operational requirements.

Food Safety & Compliance

- Maintain high standards of food hygiene, kitchen cleanliness and health and safety.
- Implement and maintain HACCP procedures, food safety records and allergen controls.
- Ensure all required food safety, hygiene and compliance checks are completed and recorded.
- Promote a safe working environment and ensure compliance with relevant legislation, policies and procedures.

Stock & Resource Management

- Manage the ordering, receipt, storage and rotation of food and kitchen supplies.
- Monitor stock levels, minimise wastage and ensure efficient use of resources within agreed budgets.
- Maintain appropriate records to support stock control, purchasing and financial monitoring.
- Identify and resolve supply issues to maintain continuity of service.

Team Leadership

- Supervise, support and motivate a small kitchen team, including Chef and Catering Assistants.
- Provide training, guidance and coaching to support performance and development.
- Foster a positive, professional and customer-focused team culture.
- Undertake routine people management responsibilities, including performance discussions, and reviews and assisting with recruitment and induction activities, with support from management where required.

Planning, Administration & Service Development

- Complete kitchen administration and compliance records accurately and in a timely manner.
- Use EPOS, stock management and Microsoft Office systems as required.
- Contribute ideas to improve menus, service delivery, efficiency and profitability.
- Take ownership of day-to-day kitchen operational issues, resolving problems where possible and escalating any significant matters appropriately.

Additional responsibilities

- Comply with all organisational policies and procedures in all employment practices.
- Maintain a positive, flexible and proactive approach to your role and responsibilities
- Flexible approach to working hours with an ability to work outside normal office hours, to include evenings and weekends as required by the business.
- Attend at staff meetings and training/development opportunities.
- Any other duties commensurate with the level of the post.
- Play an active role within the wider Land of Oak & Iron and Groundwork team and actively promote a positive image of Groundwork internally and externally.

Why Join Us?

This is a rare opportunity for a chef looking for greater work-life balance without giving up a varied and rewarding role. Our café operates seven days a week, with the Lead Chef working a five-day rota. Standard working hours are typically 8.30am to 5.00pm, meaning no late evenings or split shifts, unlike many hospitality roles. While occasional evening catering may be required for special events, these are planned in advance and form a small part of the role.

Working within our busy Heritage Centre also offers a welcoming environment, a loyal customer base, and the opportunity to be part of a passionate team delivering an excellent visitor experience.