

Senior Operations Manager

Forestry England

Plant and Seed Supply Unit

Salary: £42,462 - 46,029
Grade: Senior Executive Officer (Pay Band 3)
Contract Type: Permanent
Working Pattern: Full-time (44 hours per week)





Senior Operations Manager

We are Forestry England

For over 100 years, we have been growing, shaping and caring for over 1,500 of our nation's forests for the benefit and enjoyment of all, for this generation and the next.

We care for more land and trees than any other organisation in England. Shaping landscapes for people, wildlife and timber.

Our Goals for the next five years include:

- Create at least 2,000 hectares of predominantly broadleaf woodlands by 2026.
- Increased diversity in our tree species and forest structures.
- Continued investment in research to support forest resilience.

The Role

As Senior Operations Manager you will be at the front line of making our sure our forests are resilient as our climate changes. This is an exciting opportunity to join our Plant and Seed Supply unit, at a time when we are investing over £10 million to help us grow the millions of high-quality trees we need each year.

We are looking for an ambitious, energetic manager with impressive experience in leading teams, and improving processes, in an operational environment.

The position is based at our Delamere Nursery hub in Cheshire. The postholder will be expected to be primarily based on site, with support provided for a blended working approach. Some infrequent travel to sites across England will be required.

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We pride ourselves on being a progressive and inclusive organisation, with a wide range of benefits including:

A generous holiday entitlement

25 days annual leave, increasing to 30 days after 5 years of service plus 10.5 bank holidays/privilege days (pro rata). Option to buy or sell two days holiday each year.

Substantial training, development, and volunteering opportunities

Five days a year allocated to your own personal learning and development. Three days volunteering per year, within working hours.

Flexible working arrangements

The right to request flexible working, and options for informal blended working arrangements.

Access to the brilliant Civil Service Pension Scheme

Final salary, index-linked pension, with average employers' contribution of 27% of your salary.

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About the Plant and Seed Supply Unit

The Forestry England Plant and Seed Supply (PSS) unit manages 150ha of Forest Nursery sites, plus our Seed Processing Facility. Our operations are focussed on supplying trees for the 250,000 hectares of public land we manage.

From our Seed Processing Unit, we supply tree seed to our own nursery and to external customers. The unit, run by a team of three, is responsible for processing and storing the seed collected from our forests and seed orchards. We are looking ahead and recognise that the climate is changing. We therefore also source some seed from places where the climate today is similar to conditions we're expecting in the future, thereby increasing the resilience of our forests.

We will shortly begin work on the construction of a new, world-leading, seed processing facility. The custom designed building will house state-of-the-art

equipment, ensuring we are able to meet forest production requirements for decades to come.

At our nursery sites in Cheshire, we sow the seeds and nurture their development into high quality transplants to be planted out in our forests. We produce both bare-root plants in our open fields, and as cell-grown plants in our glasshouse and polytunnels. A team of 30 staff produce over 7 million trees annually.

Our one-hectare glasshouse currently produces 3.5 million trees each year; we have exciting plans to increase this through mechanisation and automation. The germination and growth of the seeds is carefully managed using automated systems. The whole glasshouse environment is computer-controlled using a combination of fans, shade screens and roof ventilation to regulate the temperature, humidity, and light levels; the system helps us to grow a more diverse range of species. Controlling the environmental conditions in our glass house increases survival rates and reduces the need for pesticides.

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About the Senior Manager Role

Reporting to the Head of Plant and Seed Supply, the Senior Operations Manager is responsible for all of our tree production operations. Providing high-level oversight, you will line-manage both the Container, and Bare-Root Operations Managers as well as the Seed Trading Manager and Seed Resources Manager. You will also be actively involved in the ambitious multi-million-pound projects to transform our production systems.

The Senior Operations Manager is responsible for short and long-term production planning, ensuring that customer order requirements are consistently met. The post holder will develop excellent relationships and efficient lines of communication with wider Forestry England District and National team members.

As a proven inspirational leader, you will maintain a world-class production system whilst supporting and developing our expert team.

Key Work Areas

- Responsibility for meeting annual quality and volume tree production targets.
- Production planning based on requirement forecasts and long-term objectives.
- Advising on the delivery of our transformational production projects.
- Developing and Managing performance in our production teams.
- Maintaining a first-class working culture, prioritising Health & Safety, Equality and Diversity.
- Communicating and networking with the wider organisation and external bodies.
- Contributing to national plans through attendance of operations team meetings.
- Promoting the work of PSS by hosting visitors and engaging with stakeholders.

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Essential Skills and Experience

- Degree in a relevant subject (e.g., Forestry, Horticulture, Agriculture) or ability to demonstrate equivalent level of work experience in a relevant industry.
- Experience of production planning and delivery within a fast-paced operational environment.
- Excellent IT skills, including Microsoft Office 365 applications.
- Experience of working closely with a variety of internal and external stakeholders.
- Proven leadership skills with a track record of team building and staff development.

Desirable Skills and Experience

- Awareness of the UK Forestry sector.
- Project management experience.
- Knowledge of modern commercial horticultural systems.
- Experience in biosecurity assurance and plant health management in nursery production.
- Membership of a Professional Body (e.g., Institute of Chartered Foresters, Chartered Institute of Horticulture or Chartered Management Institute)

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You will be assessed on the following behaviours:

- Delivering at Pace
- Making Effective Decisions
- Working Together
- Seeing the Bigger Picture

Find out more about the [Civil Service success profiles and behaviours](#).

For more information and to apply for this role, visit:

[Civil Service Jobs](#)

For an informal discussion about this role, please contact:

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