Job information pack

Operations and People Manager



sustain
the alliance for better food and farming

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How to apply

1. Please email your **supporting statement (covering letter)** and **CV** as a single combined PDF to **recruitment@sustainweb.org**. Label the file 'Full-Name-Statement&CV.pdf', for example: Alex-Smith-Statement&CV.pdf.

2. **Complete the recruitment form**

We will only accept applications where a CV, supporting statement and completed recruitment form has been received.

Timeline

- **Application closing date:** Monday 7 December at 9am (GMT)
- **First stage interviews** will take place (via Zoom) on: 10 or 11 December 2026
- **Second stage interviews** to take place in-person (London office) on week beginning 14 December 2026

Early applications are encouraged.

For any queries, please contact our recruitment team at **recruitment@sustainweb.org**.

Our approach to equity, diversity and inclusion

We're working hard to create an inclusive culture, where everyone feels they belong. It's important that our people reflect and represent the diversity of the communities and audiences we serve and we value lived experience, transferrable skills and a learning mindset. If you're excited about this role but you don't meet every requirement in the job description, we encourage you to apply anyway if you have other experience and skills which are transferrable.

Sustain is an accredited Living Wage employer and partricipates in a disability and ethnicity confident scheme. These schemes provide an enhanced opportunity for interviews, although it does not gurantee one due to high volumes of applications.

Job description

Job title:	**Operations and People Manager**
Reports to:	Head of Finance
Accountable to:	Works closely with Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Senior Management Team (SMT), line managers, Head of Finance, Trustees, and external HR/legal advisors.
Hours:	Full-time (35 hours / 5 days per week) or 0.8 FTE (28 hours / 4 days per week) Sustain will consider flexible working applications as per statutory legislation.
Place of work:	The Green House, 244-254 Cambridge Heath Road, London E2 9DA The role is office-based in Cambridge Heath, London.
Salary and remuneration package:	£54,082 full-time Coordinator/Manager grade at pay level 6. Pro-rated salary for 0.8 FTE (28 hours / 4 days per week) is £43,266. 5% workplace pension matching contribution, auto enrolment rules apply. 20 days' Basic Annual Leave + public holidays + 3 days of office closure between Christmas and New Year (total of approx. 31 days). Enhanced annual leave rises annually by 2 days to a top limit of 36 days for combined time off. Annual leave is pro-rated for part-time work. Non-contractual benefits include Employee Assistance Programme and Cycle to Work scheme.

Purpose of the role

The Operations and People Manager will help Sustain function effectively as an organisation and be a great place to work. This is a senior, trusted role working closely with the Chief Executive, Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Senior Management Team (SMT), line managers and Trustees to strengthen our people, operational and governance systems.

The post-holder will lead practical improvements in HR, people processes, line management standards, staff development, onboarding, offboarding, organisational culture and compliance. They will combine sound judgement, strong systems thinking and a people-centred approach, helping Sustain keep processes clear, proportionate and well-managed, while supporting colleagues to focus on effective delivery.

The mission of the Sustain alliance is to catalyse systemic change in the UK's food and farming system – securing a healthy, fair, and sustainable future for all people, nature and a stable climate. Working in collaboration with our alliance members and others, we run a range of advocacy work, projects and campaigns to achieve permanent changes in policy and practice; and to engage more people, organisations and communities in being food system change-makers.

We are looking for a person with an understanding of working with a values-driven team of people, in the charity or not-for-profit sector. The person appointed will have an appreciation of the aims and values of the Sustain alliance and be excited by supporting our organisation in effective ways of working, whilst freeing up senior leaders and spokespeople to undertake influencing, communication, partnership development and fundraising activities.

As with all senior roles at Sustain, the person appointed to this role will work mainly at the Sustain office in London during their probationary period, and thereafter at least half of working hours at our office, whilst benefiting from the flexibility offered to all colleagues. This is part of senior role-modelling of the creativity, support, engagement and well-being benefits that in-person working cultivates between colleagues. This will be managed in coordination with other senior colleagues to enable good in-person coverage and connectivity across the week and across common holiday periods.

Role and responsibilities

- Strengthen Sustain's people, HR, operational and governance systems so that the charity works effectively, fairly and well.
- Help Sustain be a great place to work, with clear standards, supportive line management, good staff development and a positive, inclusive culture.
- Lead on high standards and practical improvements in recruitment; induction; probation; appraisals; people and HR processes; line management skills, knowledge and tools; staff consultation; and organisational policies and practices.
- Support senior leaders, line managers and Trustees with clear advice, reliable processes, good records and proportionate and effective risk management.
- Develop and maintain systems that are simple, useful and appropriate for Sustain's size, values, resources and legal responsibilities

Tasks and responsibilities

Organisational operations and systems

- Lead on managing and developing the charity's operational activities.
- Ensure that senior management actions that support operational effectiveness are managed and carried out in a timely way, via an accessible and accountable process.
- Lead and/or participate in a range of internal groups that support operational effectiveness.
- Support the Chief Executive, Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and other relevant staff with governance matters, including:
    - Reporting to the Council of Trustees on operational and people matters;
    - Performance of the 'Company Secretary' role on behalf of Trustees;
    - Trustee recruitment, induction and management of necessary information and processes;
    - Appropriate compliance with the Charity Governance Code.
- Working with the Chief Executive and Chair of the Council of Trustees, help prepare and coordinate the agendas and the running of the quarterly board meeting and occasional (at least annual) staff and Trustees strategy day, as well as the Sustain AGM, Annual Report and Trustee elections (annual), as one of the key links in communication with and between Sustain's Council of Trustees.
- Lead on development and implementation of one or more relevant chapter of Sustain's Organisation Development Plan (ODP).

- Support the planning and running of events, working with Sustain team leads, partners, venues and contributors.
- Work with the Head of Finance, Head of Digital and Design and external suppliers to help ensure office, IT and operational arrangements are appropriate and support effective working.

People, HR and employment processes

- Lead development and implementation of HR processes, practical actions and transactions, using external HR and/or legal advisors for authoritative support and advice where needed.
- Lead on full lifecycle support for Sustain staff including:
    - Effective and inclusive recruitment, onboarding and offboarding – implementing Sustain's commitment to recruitment for diversity – working with SMT, finance and admin leads;
    - Creating, grading, reviewing and updating job descriptions, working with line managers and the senior leadership team;
    - Managing employment contract variances; funding precarity; end-of-contract and risk-of-redundancy processes, working with senior managers, line managers, affected employees and HR/legal advisors;
    - Creating or supporting a range of opportunities for people from diverse backgrounds and identities to get involved.
- Act as first point of contact for HR queries, taking ownership of policies and process, culture and employee relations; informed by HR advice, consultation and annual staff survey, including overseeing an action plan to embed areas of good practice, and to pursue improvements in an accountable way.
- Regular review of job descriptions, grades, progression and staff benefits within Sustain to ensure we remain competitive within the sector.
- Provide or commission sector benchmarking data, analysis and recommendations to inform decision-making, using a methodology agreed with Trustee oversight, on matters such financial and non-financial staff benefits.
- Maintain and improve the Staff Handbook, Recruitment Handbook, and related policies, guidance, advice and other support.

Line management standards, learning and staff development

- Lead the development and implementation of clear, practical standards for line management at Sustain, working with SLT, SMT, the Line Managers Forum and external advisers where appropriate.

- Develop and oversee implementation of key processes such as annual appraisals, annual planning and objective-setting, and a suitable performance management process.
- Help ensure objective-setting, personal development and progression conversations are undertaken routinely, and that these and performance management are handled consistently, fairly and in line with Sustain's values and legal responsibilities.
- Support line managers to run effective 1-to-1s, probation reviews, appraisals, workload conversations, development conversations, and difficult conversations where needed.
- Ensure suitable and sufficient ongoing learning opportunities and training for the staff team and the Line Managers group, driving the charity's approach to consistent standards, personal development and career progression.
- Maintain and improve the Line Managers Handbook and related tools, templates and guidance.

Culture, EDI, staff voice and union liaison

- Manage and develop Sustain as a great place to work, with a working culture and practices that support effective delivery, as well as health, wellbeing and personal development.
- Serve as an active member of the Diversity Group, to implement and innovate on equity, diversity, inclusion and anti-racism, and to gather data to measure and report on impact and progress.
- Working with the CEO, provide a route for requests and suggestions from the Health and Wellbeing Group to be properly considered and actioned as appropriate.
- Develop and support ways for staff voices to be heard and influence policies, practices and organisational culture, and for staff to be able to raise ideas and concerns confidently and see actions taken as a result.
- Support structured staff consultation and union liaison processes, helping ensure they are well-organised, transparent, well-documented and conducted in line with Sustain's policies and recognition arrangements.

Governance, compliance and risk management

- Develop and update key resources, contributing to useful reference sets such as the Staff Handbook, Recruitment Handbook and Line Managers Handbook, including overseeing production, maintenance and updating of all policies, procedures and guidance relevant to operations and people.
- Ensure Sustain complies with all employment, health and safety, data protection, charity legislation and statutory guidance including filing at Companies House and maintaining organisational records with the Charity Commission, and managing the risk register and internal policies tracker.

- Ensure adherence to health, safety, diversity and safeguarding procedures in the office, in hybrid working and for events and activities; undertaking comprehensive risk assessments for events and activities; and ensuring appropriate risk mitigation, staff communication and updates to guidance.

Other

- Potential for this role to line-manage one or more member of staff, volunteer, paid intern and/or external consultant, offering 1-to-1 support for objective-setting, work delivery, coaching and pastoral matters.
- Any other reasonable tasks and duties, agreed with the Chief Executive, consistent with the nature and level of the role.

Note: *This job description is not exhaustive and will be subject to periodic review. It may be amended to meet the changing needs of the charity. The post-holder will be expected to participate in this process, and we would aim to reach agreement on any changes.*

Person specification / What we're looking for

[E] - Essential / [D] - Desirable

Qualifications and requirements

- Significant experience operating at a senior level in a people, HR, operations or an organisation development role, including responsibility for organisational systems and staff management. [E]
- Experience of working in a charity, not-for-profit, campaigning, membership, alliance or other values-led organisation. [D]
- Demonstrable commitment to the operations and people role through a relevant qualification, training or other continuing professional development (CPD). [D]

Experience

- Significant experience leading organisational, people or operational improvement and advising senior decision-makers. [E]
- Developing skills and learning plans, and commissioning and/or delivering learning opportunities including training, workshops, facilitation and/or coaching. [E]
- Managing employment contracts to improve employee information and job security, especially where funding is short-term and project-based, with insights into good practice. [D]
- Delivering training and/or guidance to improve people-related functions to be delivered by line managers. [D]
- Working in a unionised organisation. [D]

Skills, abilities and attitudes

- Confidence and experience to take a leadership role on operational and people matters, working with the Chief Executive, Trustees and senior managers. [E]
- Strong problem-solving skills, and negotiation skills and the ability and confidence to provide insightful and constructive proposals and advice. [E]
- Excellent project management skills. [E]
- Aptitude for managing financial information and budgets. [D]
- Ability to communicate clearly and sensitively in writing and verbally, including on complex, confidential or contentious matters. [E]
- Proficiency with computer software and records management. [E]

Knowledge

- Knowledge and experience of end-to-end management of staff team members and their development: recruitment, induction and probation; learning experiences, skills and training; personal and career development; performance management; support for health and wellbeing; and HR processes. [E]
- Sound knowledge of UK HR and employment rules and statutory guidance, and their implementation in good practice. [E]
- Knowledge of IT, online and practical systems for improving processes and efficiency. [D]

Attitudes and personal qualities

- Highly organised and self-motivated, with the ability to work flexibly, independently and meet deadlines; whilst having the judgment to know when and who to consult before proceeding. [E]
- High integrity, with a professional, diplomatic, values-led, solutions-focused and collaborative approach to working with individuals and a wider team. [E]
- Commitment and ability to work at our office in East London regularly. [E]
- Demonstrable commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion and racial justice. [E]
- Commitment to the mission and values of Sustain, and an interest in healthy and sustainable food and farming (see: www.sustainweb.org/what-we-do/sustain-strategy/). [D]

Who we are

Sustain is a **powerful alliance of organisations** and communities working together for a better system of food, farming and fishing, and cultivating the movement for change. We represent over 100 food and farming organisations.

Together, we advocate food and agriculture policies and practices that enhance the health and welfare of people and animals, improve the working and living environment, enrich society and culture, and promote equity.

Working in collaboration, we:

- Develop networks of people and organisations to devise and implement projects and campaigns, and to provide a platform for recognition and replication of pioneering work.
- Run highly effective and creative **campaigns**, advocacy, networks and demonstration projects, aiming to catalyse permanent changes in policy and practice, and to help equip more people and communities with skills as change-makers.
- Advise and negotiate with governments, local authorities, regulatory agencies, funding bodies and other decision-makers to ensure that legislation and policies on food, fishing and agriculture are publicly accountable and socially and environmentally responsible.

Our funders

All the campaigns and projects at Sustain are funded by charitable trusts and foundations, donors and supporters who are an integral part of our successes, which has led us to receiving many awards. We are fortunate to have received grants from a wide range of funders for specific projects and campaigns, and we continue to fundraise to improve food and farming for all.

Where we work

A lovely working space is really important so we're happy to show you where we work. Our offices are a short walk from Bethnal Green tube station (Central Line) located in a vibrant part of London, with easy access to shops, Victoria Park and the Regent's Canal tow path.

We work in an open plan office with plenty of natural light and of course we have many plants, and we offer free tea and coffee.

There is a wide variety of private meeting spaces available in the building, and we also have access to a green roof-top terrace complete with trees, plants and views across London.

We also enjoy discounts in a few local shops which helps to keep the local economy thriving. Museums and parks a short walk from the offices also gives you plenty of opportunity to explore the neighbourhood during lunchtimes.

Map link

The Green House
244-254 Cambridge Heath Road
London E2 9DA









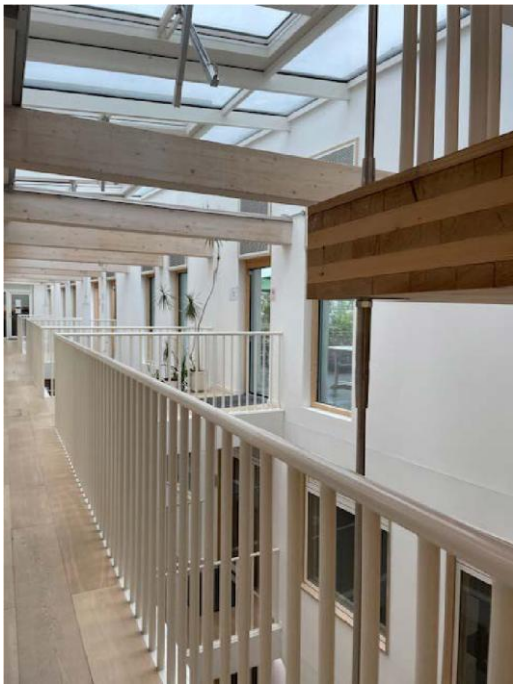
How we work

We offer a wide range of hybrid working patterns and are supportive of flexible working, however this may not be suitable for all roles. Some colleagues may work from home for part of the week, and most are expected to attend certain meetings and events in-person. Some roles require more office presence than others due to the nature of the role.

Everyone is expected to work collaboratively with colleagues and in the communities or networks where our projects are delivered.

Continuous Professional Development is as important to us as it is to you, and we offer a wide range of in-house and out-sourced training suitable for a wide variety of job roles.





> One of the reasons I joined Sustain was to make a difference to our planet and our communities. I've always been passionate about food, our environment and a fairer world for all. Working with colleagues who share the same passion and values is wonderful.

What we offer

Please note that these benefits are non-contractual.

Flexible working hours and TOIL

- Flexible and hybrid working options after probation. We have a flexible approach to working and provide Time Off in Lieu when staff are required to work occasional evenings or weekends.

Hybrid and homeworking

- Some roles are suitable for a combination of hybrid and home working, while others are more office based, allowing for collaborative working, skills sharing and peer support. We expect all colleagues to spend at least half of their working time at the office.

Welcoming office space

- Weekly organic fruit box for the office to share.
- Free secure indoor storage for bicycles and shower facilities.
- A fully equipped London based office.

Time off and volunteer day

- 20 days annual leave for full-time employed staff plus bank holidays (pro-rated for part-time workers).
- Office closure between Christmas and New Year.
- 1 volunteer day per year.

Pension

- Automatic pension enrolment with Nest with up to 5% (subject to review) employer contributions, with an ethical investment option.

Health and wellbeing

- Enhanced sick pay.
- Employee Assistance Programme, giving access to confidential advice on mental health and wellbeing.
- Cycle to Work scheme.
- Eye care vouchers.
- Access to membership of CSSC for discounted days out, savings, sports and wellbeing.

Making a difference in the world with our friendly supportive team

- An opportunity to work on pioneering projects at a local and national level.
- A collegiate set up within an established charity.
- A friendly, creative and sociable team.
- Job related training opportunities.