



Deputy Head Keeper – African Experience Section

Salary: Up to £31,500.00 Per Annum, Plus Desirable Benefits

Permanent, Full-Time Position

Onsite accommodation may be available dependent on occupancy

Are you wild about creating memorable experiences?

Do you want to work in a place where you can hear the roar from our pride of Lions, or calls from troops of Howler Monkeys?

Port Lympne Hotel & Reserve are looking for an enthusiastic and motivated Deputy Head Keeper to join our team of dedicated African Experience Keepers. This unique section is home to an incredible variety of iconic African species, including Nubian giraffe, black rhino, eland, Chapman's zebra, and blue wildebeest, as well as other remarkable animals such as Przewalski's horses, European bison, and various deer species.

As **Deputy Head Keeper**, you will play a key role in supporting the Section Head with the day-to-day management of the African Experience Section and its team. This includes overseeing the section in the Head Keeper's absence, helping to develop and support less experienced keepers, and supervising interns and volunteers. You will be responsible for monitoring animal behaviour and health, reviewing and preparing correct diets, and promptly reporting any concerns to the Section Head or veterinary team.

Your duties will also include cleaning and maintaining enclosures to a high standard, assisting with general repairs and improvements, contributing to animal enrichment, and helping with the safe movement and transport of animals. You'll be expected to follow all safety and emergency procedures, maintain good communication across departments, and provide excellent customer service to visitors. There may also be opportunities to assist with administrative tasks and represent the parks at external seminars or conferences.

Who are we looking for:

The ideal candidate will have a minimum of five years' experience in zoological animal management, including direct experience working with the species found within the African Experience Section. You will have a recognised Animal Management qualification, along with a solid understanding of species biology, natural history, husbandry, and welfare. You will demonstrate a strong awareness of current conservation issues, a genuine passion for animal welfare, and a proactive approach to species enrichment, both within your section and across the park.

You will have excellent all-round husbandry skills, a good working knowledge of health and safety protocols, including conducting risk assessments, and the ability to work confidently both as part of a team and independently. Strong leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills are key to this role, as well as the ability to supervise and support less experienced staff, interns, and volunteers. Proficiency in Microsoft Office applications is required for administrative tasks, and due to the nature of the role, a high level of physical fitness and a full, valid driving licence are essential.

Contract details:

This is a full-time, permanent position working 40 hours a week, 5 days out of 7 including weekends and bank holidays. Candidates must have the right to work in the UK. A reliable mode of transport is recommended due to our remote location.

The location:

Port Lympne Hotel & Reserve is a world-renowned wild animal park set within 600 acres of Kentish savannah. The Reserve is home to some of the world's most rare and endangered animals and offers luxury short breaks accommodation, free roaming animal safaris, once-in-a-lifetime animal encounters and exquisite dining experiences. Most importantly, every one of our employees is part of real conservation in action and their efforts have contributed to animals such as black rhino and western lowland gorillas being returned to their natural habitats in collaboration with our partners at The Aspinall Foundation.

Why you should join us:

We're on a mission to create memorable experiences that matter, and our Core Values 'One Team', 'Customer' and 'Pride' are what drive us each day to become part of something extraordinary. As well as walking to work surrounded by the calls of Howler monkeys and the roars from our pride of Lions, you will join a supportive team who are passionate about their place of work. Be part of the Port Lympne and Howletts family and join our pride.

You can also expect a host of other 'roarsome' benefits including:

- 28 days annual leave inclusive of bank holidays, rising with length of service (*pro-rata to start date and working hours*)
- Comprehensive training and development opportunities, including workshops and e-learning.
- Enhanced Sickness, Maternity and Paternity Policies.
- Unlimited free entry for you and a person of your choice into both of our parks as well as friends and family tickets.
- Exceptional discounts on food, retail and accommodation at our parks.
- Numerous retail discounts and access to a 24-hour counselling line through our Healthy Extras Scheme.
- Company Pension
- And many more length or service-related rewards and Benefits.

Your adventure awaits.

#joinourpride

Closing Date: Wednesday 20 August 2025

To Apply: Please email your full C.V. and covering letter to:

recruitment@howlettsandportlympne.com