

## Group Lead – Criminal Justice Settings in Northern Ireland

**VACANCY REFERENCE CODE: 04/2021**

*Please quote this code on the application form*

*“A writer only begins a book. A reader finishes it.” - Samuel Johnson*

**We are looking for someone with a deep connection with reading and literature, who is interested and able to work in challenging, rewarding criminal justice settings in Northern Ireland – three prisons and a juvenile justice centre.**

**Please note that this post is subject to funding being secured.**

- **Hours:** Full or part time opportunities (minimum 0.25 FTE, maximum 1.0 FTE): three settings are close to Belfast and one – HMP Magilligan – is 1½ hours by car from Belfast.
- **Reporting to:** CJ People and Projects Manager
- **Based:** Northern Ireland
- **Duration:** Fixed Term Contract, ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022
- **Salary:** 17-22k, depending on experience
- **Delivery locations:** HMP Maghaberry, Lisburn; HMP Hydebank Wood, Belfast; HMP Magilligan, Co Londonderry; Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre, Bangor.

There is the possibility of working across all workplaces depending on your geographic location and preparedness to drive between the settings. We recognise the distance of HMP Magilligan from the other settings. Previously the post has been divided into two part-time positions – 0.75 FTE working in HMP Maghaberry, HMP Hydebank Wood and Woodlands; 0.25 FTE working in HMP Magilligan. We anticipate this model will remain the most practical but are happy to consider applicants who are able to work across all settings.

### **Who's The Reader?**

We're a national charity that wants to bring about a Reading Revolution, so that everyone can experience and enjoy great literature, which we believe is a tool for helping humans survive and live well.

Through a growing movement of 1,000 volunteers and partners, we bring thousands of people together each week to share and discuss great novels, short stories and poems. We call this Shared Reading.

We read with schools, families and looked-after-children, adults in community spaces, people in care homes, people with physical and mental health conditions, those coping with or recovering from addiction, and people in the criminal justice system.

Everything we do – from our global Shared Reading movement to the events, activities and social businesses on offer at Calderstones Park – builds warm and lively communities by bringing people together and books to life.

We use the sharing of stories, poems and plays with great human content to improve people's wellbeing. We call the model we use *Shared Reading*; this deceptively simple model brings people together in small groups, led by a trained facilitator who helps everyone in the room find a way to engage meaningfully with the text and each other. A core aspect of the Shared Reading model is that every text the group engages with is read aloud (most often by the group leader). This has many benefits, including making the groups more accessible to those who might struggle with literacy, or confidence. Discussions in groups are conversational, and are not aimed towards assessment or academic analysis.

### **About the Workplaces**

The Reader currently works in 35 criminal justice settings across the UK. Some of our work is positioned in specialist units, which aim to give residents space to put new ways of thinking into practice in ordinary situations. The criminal justice settings in Northern Ireland are:

- Magilligan Prison – a medium security prison which houses short to medium term sentenced adult male prisoners and a small number of life sentenced prisoners;
- Maghaberry Prison – a high security prison housing adult male long-term and short-term sentenced and remand prisoners.
- Hydebank Wood College-- a medium to low security young offenders centre and prison accommodating male remand and sentenced young offenders between the ages of 17 and 21 years serving a period of four years or less. The site also houses females both remand and sentenced.
- Woodlands Juvenile Justice Centre – a secure setting for boys and girls between the ages of 10 and 17.

The Reader has been commissioned by The Public Health Agency to provide meaningful, purposeful activity to contribute to the improvement of the mental health and wellbeing of adult and young offenders. All of our work necessitates the ability to cultivate good, professional relationships, create meaningful interactions, whilst paying attention to specific interpersonal difficulties.

### **Key Responsibilities**

Taking up the advertised role would require you to:

- Lead weekly Shared Reading groups in criminal justice settings: to aid the people in those environments with their personal growth, as well as, more generally, fostering reading for pleasure, wellbeing and good mental health
- Work closely with host organisation staff to plan delivery of Shared Reading groups, engaging with setting staff at all levels to build relationships with them, and together embed Shared Reading within the environment's culture and routine
- Build and maintain good relationships with prison and juvenile justice centre residents; the ability to meaningfully connect with people from all backgrounds will be needed
- Select and work with a wide range of reading material, including poetry, in order to stimulate deep reflection and free-flowing conversation, striking a balance between accessibility, complexity, and appropriateness along with sensitivity to group members
- Demonstrate the impact of Shared Reading to setting staff, including security personnel, administrators, and clinicians
- Record details of your groups and take an active role in our annual organisation-wide evaluation process
- Feedback to key staff within the host setting and your line manager at The Reader.
- Provide on-going mentoring for Reader-trained staff in settings, including: the selection, planning and preparation of texts; observation of delivery; and feedback
- Contribute to monthly newsletters to support skills development amongst trained partner organisation staff
- Maintain a commitment to and awareness of both The Reader's policies and safeguarding requirements and those of our commissioners and funders.
- Hold responsibility for promoting and safeguarding the welfare of the children, young people and vulnerable adults you come into contact with
- Attend and contribute to staff meetings, feeding back useful information from your setting
- Work as an effective team member, participating in personal and professional development, wider organisational meetings and, as required, make written contributions for newsletters, reports, our website, and wider publications
- Take an active role and interest in the core business of The Reader which includes training others in Shared Reading techniques, communicating the work of The Reader effectively
- Fundraising activities if and as required
- Represent The Reader in public, maintaining relationships with partner agencies and ensuring positive impacts are recorded

## Person Specification

Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Able to facilitate effective group work, and deal with potentially distressing situations in a careful and considered manner (E)</li> <li>• Understanding of the problems of engaging people who think books are not for them (D)</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience working in comparable environments (D)</li> </ul>
Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ability to demonstrate wide range of personal reading, including poetry, demonstrate its importance and the ability to talk about it in an engaging manner, and/or a degree in English Literature (E)</li> <li>• Be able to demonstrate why literature is important to you (E)</li> <li>• Comfortable with reading aloud (E)</li> <li>• Excellent IT skills – familiar with Microsoft Office Suite (E)</li> <li>• A good communicator with great speaking, listening, relationship building and writing skills (E)</li> <li>• Ability to engage with reflective practice concerning your own and others' emotional lives, including the provision of focused feedback and/or delivering training packages (D)</li> <li>• Self-motivated and able to work unsupervised (E)</li> <li>• Able to work in a peripatetic style (E)</li> </ul>
Special Circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committed to The Reader's beliefs and values (E)</li> <li>• For those settings which are not easily accessible by public transport, a current driving licence and own transport (E)</li> <li>• Prison security clearance and/or fully enhanced DBS check (E)*</li> </ul>

\* E = Essential      D = Desirable

\*\*You must be willing to undergo a fully enhanced DBS check (and obtain full prison clearance, where settings require). If you do not have this at the point of application, this can be arranged. All job offers will be subject to obtaining this clearance.

Training in Shared Reading and Safeguarding practice will be provided.

### How to Apply

- Note. Please do not just send in a CV. We will only consider applications that adhere to the following process -
- Visit [www.thereader.org.uk](http://www.thereader.org.uk) and select the 'Get Involved Section' where you will be able to view the full job description, recruitment pack and download an application form. Please complete the application form and submit to [laurakershaw@thereader.org.uk](mailto:laurakershaw@thereader.org.uk)

**Deadline for applications: 5pm, 4<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

- NB: applications arriving after 5pm will not be considered
- A high volume of applications may make replies to everyone impossible.

**Selection Process:** If successful at shortlisting you will be invited to attend a panel interview. You may be required to complete a selection task at the interview if this is the case you will be informed of this prior to the interview date.