

# RECRUITMENT PACK



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#SharedReading

The Mansion House,  
Calderstones Park  
Liverpool  
L18 3JB

**r** The  
Reader

# About The Reader

*“Who knew that reading – which I was told was a solitary affair – could bring people together in the same way that a book can bring a reader to the world?”*

**Lemn Sissay**

The Reader is 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. By reading with school groups, families, adults, looked after children, older people in care homes, adults with physical and / or mental health conditions, people coping with or recovering from addiction and individuals in the criminal justice system, our work is helping to improve wellbeing, reduce isolation and build stronger communities.

Shared Reading is a powerful group experience that brings literature to life. A group of two or more people – one of them a trained Reader Leader – meet, usually weekly, and read great novels, poetry, plays or other literary matter, aloud. It's not a course, it's not a book club.

Reading the literature aloud, sharing it in real time, means that everyone is involved in a live experience.

**Our Vision** is of a world in which everyone has ‘something real to carry home when day is done’.

**Our Mission** is 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. Everything we do – from our Shared Reading groups to our social enterprises, from our publications to The Storybarn at Calderstones – brings people together and books to life to make this happen.



## The Reader At Calderstones

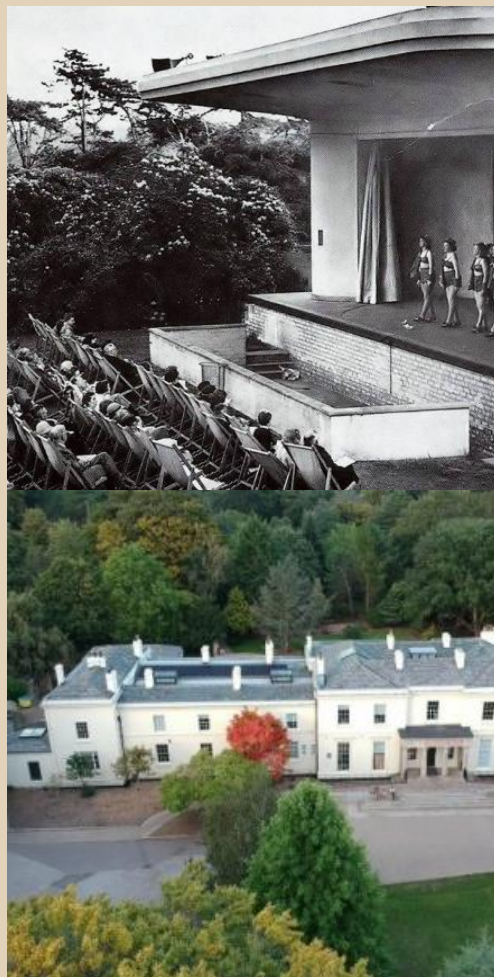
Our Head Office is based in the Mansion House in Liverpool's Calderstones Park.

With the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), Liverpool City Council (LCC) and grant funders, The Reader has transformed the Grade II listed Mansion House in Calderstones Park into an international flagship project for Shared Reading, a model reading community, which opened in September 2019.

The Reader at Calderstones offers a working model of a community that has literature, art, heritage, wellbeing activities, food and fun at its heart. It's the first community of its kind in the UK and indeed, the world - a place where everyone can come to find something real to take home at the end of the day.

The Reader at Calderstones is home to the Calderstones Mansion House Community Interest Company's social enterprises, the Reader Café, the Ice Cream Parlour and the Storybarn, our imaginative play space, which generate income to support our charitable work. The Storybarn welcomes 6,000 children and family members and 74 schools and 3000 pupils, inspired by a lifelong love of reading for pleasure.

This a place unlike any other, where everyone is welcome, and where anyone can come to experience literature, find and share meaning, be nourished, develop new skills and explore creativity.



## What our staff say

*"The overall friendly vibe in the office, the teamwork and culture of helping each other out, the focus on staff members as individuals and the culture of empathy and kindness that working with literature fosters - it is the nicest place I have ever worked"*

**Employee Survey, November 2019**

*"The Reader staff are a warm, generous and supportive team. A real cliché but it really does feel like one big family where everyone has your back"*

**Employee Survey, November 2019**

## Shared Reading Reach



**719**

groups and 1:1 readings  
taken place between 2019-  
2020



**13,766**

beneficiaries reached  
through Shared Reading  
activities



**28,154**

beneficiaries engaged with  
our activities

Data taken from April 2019 to March 2020

## Our Impact

We regularly capture the impact that Shared Reading has on readers and volunteers, on children and adults, in prisons, in health and social care and in the community. These stories inspire us to do more to help people build deeper connections with each other, and themselves.



**94%** said it *“makes me feel better”*



**89%** said it *“helps me connect with  
others in a different way”*

*Feedback from our Community Survey, September 2020  
– 351 individuals surveyed, response rate 84%*

**Thanks to the support of the players of the People’s Postcode Lottery, we’re making important investments in our people, systems and processes that enable our work to thrive.**

- We’ve transformed the way we deliver Shared Reading under the banner ‘The Reader at Home’, bringing the connection and comfort of great literature to new and existing audiences in need of wellbeing support, distraction and meaning during Covid.
- We’ve created and curated over 100 pieces of digital reading content and grown our followers on Facebook by 50%.
- We were awarded the Investors in Volunteers standard in recognition of the quality of our volunteer support.
- We’ve improved the digital support we offer volunteers with the soft launch of a new online community hub which includes a library of over 1000 reading resources and new training videos.





# Our Values

*“People are dying – it is no metaphor –  
for lack of something real to carry  
home when day is done.”*

**Saul Bellow, *Herzog***

Our values reflect and shape our behaviour, and guide our volunteers, staff, trustees and supporters as we work together to bring about a Reading Revolution.

## **We read to lead**

Great literature is in our DNA, developing imagination, deepening understanding and expanding experience. Reading is also about the kind of attention and understanding we give to our actions, other people and the wider world.

## **We are kind but bold**

Through kindness we inspire ourselves, and others, to do more than we might have thought possible, always aiming for encouragement and trust. But we are bold, too, in saying what we mean as clearly as we can.

## **We make our own pattern in the world**

We don't simply do as others do, we try to work out what is good and right, and do that. We value innovation, foresight and bold ideas in every part of our organisation.

## **We learn from experience and we learn through our mistakes**

We're not afraid of owning our mistakes: understanding them helps us grow. We try to be creative in difficult situations, lively-minded and willing to learn.

## **We love The Reader and take responsibility for it**

Everyone at The Reader is The Reader. We each take responsibility for making The Reader as good as it can be: we pick up the rubbish, speak up when we've made a mistake, notice and try to fix the glitches.

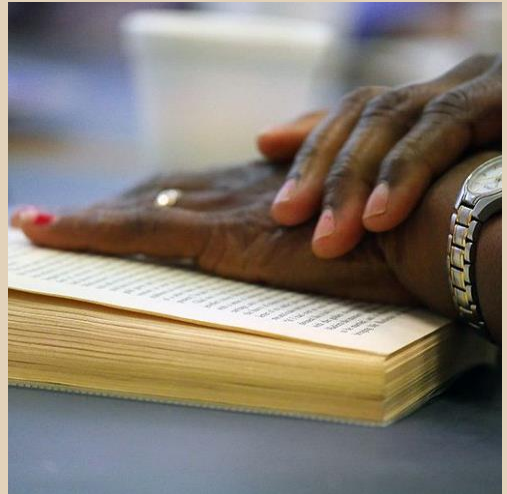


*visioning a world  
where none is lonely, none hunted, alien,  
this man, superb in love and logic, this man  
shall be remembered.*

**From Frederick Douglass  
by Robert Hayden**

## **Belonging at The Reader**

### **Our diversity, equality and inclusion statement**



In a nearly twenty-year history of developing Shared Reading groups, The Reader has created thousands of warm and welcoming spaces where all comers are seen and, when they choose to speak, heard.

We consciously work to build the same warm and welcoming feeling, the feeling of belonging, in our workplace. Kindness is one of our values and it helps us care about how we treat each other, always aiming for encouragement, openness and trust.

We use our values to try to ensure The Reader is a thoughtful environment, and we ask all colleagues to be bold, building an environment where all needs and concerns can be raised, listened to, and when possible acted upon. So we'll ask you to tell us if you have any specific needs or if there are things we can do to make you feel more at ease.

One of our values is 'we make our own pattern in the world' and we do that by appointing the best candidate to the role. Current employees and applicants for jobs will always be considered on their abilities and will not be discriminated against on the grounds of age, caring responsibilities, colour, disability, employment status, sex, gender, gender identity, marital status, nationality, race or ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation or socio-economic status.

In our commitment to build diversity into our teams and programmes, we are particularly keen to receive applications from people from black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds; LGBTQ+; those with disabilities, those with unconventional life experience or educational background.



If you require any reasonable adjustments during our recruitment processes, including assistance with reading this page or documents linked to below, please contact [jobs@thereader.org.uk](mailto:jobs@thereader.org.uk)

# READER IN RESIDENCE

Hours/FTE	8.75 hours / 0.25 FTE per location (Market Harborough require 7 hours on Tuesdays)
Reports to	Criminal Justice People and Projects Manager
Based	Leeds / Market Harborough
Contract	Fixed Term (Until March 2024 with possibility of extension)
Salary	£21,500 (pro rata) (Travel to and from settings will be accounted for)
Closing date	Ongoing

## About the Role and Key Responsibilities

This role requires a love of great literature and a drive to break down barriers to help others experience its power. At The Reader we call this ‘Shared Reading’. Shared Reading is a tool through which human life can be explored safely and - crucially - deeply. Shared Reading is a group of people, one of them a trained Reader Leader, reads a great novel, short story or poem aloud. They stop and talk about what has been read. The idea is to create a space where people feel at ease. Reading the literature aloud in real-time, means that everyone is involved in a shared, live experience. We want to grow our Shared Reading movement in the criminal justice sector so more people in this system get access to this experience - could you join us to be part of this?

Following training, the post holder will lead and support the delivery of regular Shared Reading groups with individuals progressing through the justice system. This will involve engaging with those who don’t feel such groups are for them, and embedding Shared Reading as part of the setting’s weekly schedule of activities. The role is as part of our Criminal Justice Team, working in different settings across the UK and delivering our HMPPS contract for the enrichment programme for a nationwide body of Psychologically Informed Planned Environments (PIPEs) as part of the Offender Personality Disorder (OPD) Pathway. See supplementary information for more details.

## **Key Responsibilities:**

### **Knowledge and Skills**

- Lead a weekly Shared Reading group creating a safe space for residents to share great literature together
- Literary Skills: a demonstrable relationship with literature, an eagerness to learn and develop a strong understanding of Shared Reading and how literature can work to improve people's lives, along with the ability to articulate this well
- Build rapport and professional relationships with residents and with staff at all levels within settings to promote Shared Reading groups and engage with those who may feel the groups are not for them.
- Good IT skills and excellent record keeping skills. Must be familiar with the Microsoft Office suite of applications and able to use a CRM system
- An excellent, authentic communicator with well-developed speaking, listening, relationship-building and writing skills. Comfortable reading aloud.
- Able to engage diverse audiences – who may lack social confidence and/or literacy confidence
- Abreast of sector trends and news, able to identify and share opportunities or helpful information
- A love of literature, able to demonstrate a wide variety of personal reading

### **Leadership and Management**

- Mentor and develop partner staff following their completion of The Reader's Read to Lead training course, to ensure they are able to deliver high quality Shared Reading groups to their residents. This includes the selection, planning and preparation of texts; observation of delivery; and constructive feedback to facilitate development of skills.

### **Communication**

- Work closely with setting staff to embed Shared Reading within the setting's culture and routine
- Feedback information about groups and member engagement to key staff within the host setting and report to your line manager at The Reader.

### **Liaison and Networking**

- Liaise with your team to share best practice and develop shared knowledge via meetings and staff gatherings
- Collaborate with colleagues from the wider organisation (ie Literature Directorate)

### **Planning and Organising**

- Manage and prioritise a demanding workload to meet targets, including preparation for groups (striking a balance between accessibility, complexity, and appropriateness along with sensitivity to group members), maintaining digital records, contributing to project reports and annual evaluation process, and preparation of case studies.



## **Initiative and Problem Solving**

- Use initiative to solve day-to-day problems in partnership with setting staff and in collaboration with line manager within the parameters of your role
- Contribute to developing solutions to delivery challenges (ie TR's Alternative Provision) and relevant content

## **Decision making and freedom to act**

- Day to day decisions regarding Shared Reading delivery in external settings, working within the framework of the project and shared reading model

## **Teamworking and Collaboration**

- 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.
- Work with line manager to ensure that project aims and objectives are met.

Any other duties commensurate with the grade, including taking part in, or leading a Shared Reading group.

# **Person Specification**

## **Essential Criteria:**

- Able to facilitate effective group work, and deal with potentially distressing situations related to the environment in a careful and considered manner
- Self-motivated and able to work under minimal supervision
- Good IT skills, including Microsoft Word, Excel and Outlook. Must be willing to learn new IT Skills.
- Excellent record keeping skills
- Understand the problems of and possible solutions to engaging people who think books are not for them
- Able to demonstrate wide range of personal reading - including poetry – and demonstrate its importance and the ability to talk about it in an engaging manner
- Comfortable with reading aloud
- An excellent, authentic communicator with great speaking, listening, relationship building and writing skills

- Ability to engage with reflective practice concerning your own and others' emotional lives, including the provision of focused feedback and/or delivering training packages
- Able to demonstrate an understanding of the work of The Reader and its social values
- Have a good understanding of the purpose and social mission of The Reader and to be able to increase and grow Shared Reading across the UK
- Able to work in a peripatetic style
- Driving license and access to a car as required

**Desirable Criteria:**

- Undertaken The Reader's Teaching Associate Pathway (internal candidates only)
- Experience working in Criminal Justice Sector
- Experience in designing and delivering training packages
- Experience of The Reader's Shared Reading model
- Understanding of the Criminal Justice Sector, trends and policy
- Experience leading groups, particularly in sensitive settings

## Employee Benefits

- 30 days leave allowance a year plus bank holidays (pro rata dependent on FTE)
- Employer Pension Scheme – Auto enrollment begins three months after start date. Payments are matched 4% on auto enrollment scheme and 6% on standard scheme by The Reader.
- Flexible working policy (44% of staff work flexibly, *January 2021*)
- Opportunities for personal development, including external training
- Head Office based within Calderstones Park
- All employees have access to an Employee Assistance Programme with Health Assured
- Four employees are Mental Health First Aid Champions being able to provide advice to staff

## Pre-Employment Checks

- All employment offers are conditional upon receipt of two satisfactory professional references. Referees will be sought from an applicant once an offer of employment is made and referees will not be approached without the applicant's permission.
- All contract types are subject to a probationary period of 6 months.
- Where necessary and appropriate for the role, a relevant DBS check will be undertaken as part of the onboarding process.

## How to apply

Visit [www.thereader.org.uk](http://www.thereader.org.uk) and select the 'Get Involved Section' where you will be able to view and download an application form. Please complete the application form and submit to [jobs@thereader.org.uk](mailto:jobs@thereader.org.uk)

### Equal Opportunities

We are committed to attracting diverse candidates. Applicants who meet our minimum (essential) criteria and identify as one of the following will be guaranteed an interview.

- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
- LGBTQ+
- Those with disabilities
- Those with unconventional life experience or educational background

### Deadline for applications: Ongoing

- 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.

### Attending the Interview

We will cover travel expenses for anyone who is not currently in a position to do so.

If you need any more information on the format of the interview, who will be interviewing, and what to expect on the day, please contact [aurakershaw@thereader.org.uk](mailto:aurakershaw@thereader.org.uk).

If you have any special requirements, please let us know in advance and we will be happy to make any adjustments needed.



The Reader is supported by:

