

JOIN THE READER TEAM



WELCOME

Thank you for your interest in working with us. We hope that in return we can offer you an exciting and varied job, a career filled with purpose, development opportunities and many additional benefits.

The Reader is a national charity that uses the power of literature and reading aloud to transform lives. Everyone who works with us, regardless of their job title, plays a part in contributing to this. Our Shared Reading model brings people together to read great stories and poems - creating powerful moments of connection. In a world that feels increasingly divided, and with increased pressures on our mental health, Shared Reading offers us time and space to share what matters to us.

"Shared Reading gave me the confidence to believe in myself. I'd never experienced anything like it; just talking about what came up in our minds as we read the text. It was a small group, and nobody was trying to show off in a way that sometimes happens in academia.

It was gentle, and kind, and lovely. I thought it was amazing. I realised I didn't need any literary experience. In fact, I didn't need anything besides the openness to engage, connect and be present."

Mariana
Storybarn Coordinator



We are very proud that wellbeing has been and always will be a priority here, and many of our staff stay with us for a long time because of this.

We are committed to benchmarking our salaries regularly to ensure we provide good pay in a competitive sector, offering opportunities for personal development and career progression and enabling staff to experience the life-changing benefits of Shared Reading.

We are based at the beautiful Mansion House in Calderstones Park in South Liverpool, and a nationwide charity whose values and ethos span our remote team and the communities we support. The Reader is 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. Our work is supported by a collective of commissioners, grant funders, corporate partners and individuals.

Jemma Guerrier

Managing Director



"At The Reader you are a person, you're thought of as a complete individual and your needs are taken into account. It's allowed me to 100% be myself at work."



WHAT SHARED READING DOES

"It's about feelings. It's about reading something and saying 'that's just made me feel this' - it's about connection. That's what happens in the room in between the story."

If you're new to literature or not, the impact of getting together and connecting through reading aloud, whether a book or poem, is at the heart of everything we do. In contrast to traditional reading groups, in our Shared Reading sessions the reading takes place within the groups themselves, rather than in advance. The liveness of the reading opens up space for new thoughts to emerge and new connections to be forged. We read 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.

We know that our work is helping to improve wellbeing, reduce isolation and build stronger communities. We offer the opportunity for all our staff members to experience and benefit from shared reading. It is open to all and you don't need to be academic or have previous experience with literature. You might be surprised at what shared reading can do for you too.

Katie Clark
Director of Literature



85%

say Shared Reading helps them to understand other people better

95%

say Shared Reading makes me feel better

95%

look forward to their group as an important part of their week



STAFF BENEFITS

- **Generous holiday entitlement.**
- **Holiday exchange scheme.**
- **Flexible working options including home, hybrid and remote options.**
- **A chance to experience the benefits of Shared Reading.**
- **Employee Assistance Programme.**
- **Hardship Fund.**
- **Enhancements to statutory provision for maternity / paternity and sickness absence.**
- **Beautiful head office location.**
- **Free onsite parking.**
- **Regular opportunities to visit for remote staff.**



**Hear from our people in their own words
about why they love working at The Reader:**

**"If you're looking for an employer who cares about you and your wellbeing
then it's the right place."**

We are extremely invested in the wellbeing of our people, particularly when it comes to mental health and vulnerability.

**"There is always a very open dialogue with regards to new roles. I was
encouraged to go for another role if it was out there. I was allowed to develop
as I could and make my own decisions."**

We are hugely supportive of career development and proactively provide opportunities for our people to develop and grow. We offer lots of different progression paths, including into other roles and departments.

**"When I'm having a bad day I tell myself that I'm helping support the people
who deliver those Shared Reading groups."**

We are mission driven and values led. We offer company wide annual 'Think Days' where we all get together to enjoy Shared Reading.

OUR VALUES

Our values reflect and shape our behaviour and guide our volunteers, staff, trustees and supporters as we work together to bring people together and books to life.



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.



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

APPLICATION PROCESS

"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."



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. Where necessary and appropriate for the role, a relevant DBS check will be undertaken as part of the onboarding process.

How to apply

Visit thereader.org.uk/jobs to download an application form. Once completed, please send to laurakershaw@thereader.org.uk. Unfortunately, if we receive a high volume of applications, we may not be able to reply to everyone individually.

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.

Selection process

If successful at shortlisting, you will be invited to interview. There may be an informal stage for some roles, for other roles we may also ask you to complete a task ahead of or at the interview, and for some roles we will hold a second stage interview. We will keep you informed of our expectations during the process. We will provide all interview questions in advance.

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 laurakershaw@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.

HEAD OF PEOPLE

HOURS/FTE: 35 hours per week (we would be happy to discuss flexible working patterns and will give due consideration to part time and job share requests)

REPORTS TO: Managing Director

BASED: This role is suitable for hybrid or on site working at Calderstones, Liverpool

CONTRACT: Permanent

SALARY: £41,715 per annum

CLOSING DATE: 9am, 16 February 2024

About the Role and Key Responsibilities

This is an exciting opportunity for a HR generalist as The Reader enters its next phase of evolution - focussing on bringing Shared Reading to diverse communities of people up and down the UK whilst developing the creative community at Calderstones (which is into it's 3rd year of operation). As the organisation evolves we are looking for a Head of People to influence and shape our thinking by initiating and delivering some exciting and ambitious projects. These projects will preserve and build on our unique culture and ensure our people are able to do their best work while having an excellent experience.

The role will suit an innovative, disruptive people professional who can confidently drive both operational and cultural change, living our value 'we make our own pattern in the world'. As a Head of Department you form part of our extended, senior leadership team who work closely with alongside our Directors Group. Supported by a small dedicated People Team (two FTEs) you will lead the strategic direction of the People function with responsibility for delivering our People Strategy and our Talent Management strategy, and with a key role to play in the delivery of key elements of our EDI strategy.

CIPD qualified or able to demonstrate you have the knowledge and skill required to deliver the responsibilities of the role. You will be The Reader's HR and people expert, advising and supporting across all areas of the organisation. Your sound practical knowledge of HR and employee relations will provide guidance and support to 160+ staff and our national network of 700 volunteers to deliver our charitable and social enterprise activities.

Your key areas of responsibility will be:

- Working closely with the Managing Director and Director of Literature continuing our work on defining, embedding and maintaining our culture and on workforce planning and shaping.
- Leading the People/HR function, ensuring our people practices are fit for purpose but also aligned to our culture and values.
- Leading on staff engagement, monitoring and responding to information and insights and continually looking for creative ways to maintain and improve engagement.
- Work closely with the extended senior leadership team and Directors to implement our EDI strategy and create a culture where diversity is at the forefront of our organisational thinking and embedded in all day to day activities
- Ensuring the organisation is compliant and up to date with employment law
- Delivering organisational development initiatives, as part of our People and Talent Management strategies
- Playing a key role in change management across the organisation providing advice and support to senior leaders on best practice around implementing change and helping people adapt to change.
- Responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of people analytics and data-driven insights helping to guide our decision making and show the value of our OD and people initiatives.
- Responsible for safeguarding at The Reader, ensuring all staff have undertaken relevant mandatory training, ensuring the 24/7 safeguarding service is effectively provided, and acting as the Designated Safeguarding officer, managing the team of Safeguarding leads.

Person Specification

- Excellent leadership and management skills
- Experienced in delivering organisational development initiatives
- Experienced in change management
- Be able to balance long term strategic thinking with practical operational needs
- Excellent communication and influencing skills with the ability to build rapport with a range of stakeholders
- Comfortable with uncertainty
- Clear and decisive decision maker, having the strength of convictions to make the 'right' decisions.
- Able to be bold and explicit in communications when required
- A clear understanding of what Shared Reading is and why it matters
- A clear understanding of the sector and the specific challenges that may present themselves in both a charity and a social enterprise
- Commitment to both personal and organisational learning
- Experienced dealing with a range of employee relations issues
- Drives sustained performance and achievement of targets, goals, objectives
- Demonstrates clear analytical skills, is inquisitive with a high attention to detail
- Able to champion and role model our culture taking action when necessary to ensure it thrives

The recruitment process for this role will be split into two stages, the first stage will consist of a Shared Reading taster session and Q&A, a task and an interview with two of our directors. We plan for this to be held on Monday 26 February.

The second stage will be an interview with a Trustee, our Director of Literature and Managing Director and is planned for week commencing 4 March. We will share interview questions and task in advance.

To view a full job description please click [here](#)

If you would like an informal chat about this role, please contact Zoe Ainscough via zoegilling@thereader.org.uk

Find Out More

Visit our website

For the latest opportunities and news, along with ways you can get support the Reading Revolution and details of where to find a Shared Reading group, visit thereader.org.uk

Follow us on social media

Follow @thereaderorg on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram for all the latest updates.

Drop into a group

Experience the joy of reading aloud together in a Shared Reading group – for free and for everyone. Visit the website or call 0151 729 2200 to find a group near you.

Tune into The Reader podcast

Discover what our Reading Revolution is all about and help spread the word. Listen on Spotify or Apple.



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