

# 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](mailto: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](http://thereader.org.uk/jobs) to download an application form. Once completed, please send to [laurakershaw@thereader.org.uk](mailto: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](mailto: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.**



# STORYHUNTER

**HOURS/FTE:** 6.5 hours (weekend contract) and Zero hours available

**REPORTS TO:** Storybarn Manager

**BASED:** Calderstones Park, Liverpool, L18 3JB

**CONTRACT:** Fixed Term

**SALARY:** £11.44 per hour (salary currently under review)

**CLOSING DATE:** 5pm, Thursday 25th April 2024

## About the Role and Key Responsibilities

The Storybarn is a creative, interactive environment in which children can feel thoroughly alive and creative in the company of quality literature. With Shared Reading at the heart of all that we do, we believe that books offer children a way to understand the world in which they live and the worlds inside themselves. The Reader exists to provide book-routes into this inner space, and to develop shared understandings of both it, and the outer world. Training will be provided with space for creative adaptation of delivery for applicants to really make the role their own.

This role could be for you if you:

- Passionately believe in the value of reading
- Are flexible, enthusiastic and positive
- Are incredible outgoing and confident working with children and families
- Are compassionate and creative
- Are able to work every weekend (6.5hrs) with the opportunity to work additional hours if you would like

## What else can we offer you?

- Flexible Working Options including home working.
- A chance to personally experience the wellbeing benefits of Shared Reading – we do lots of reading in the workplace and you'll have the opportunity to visit our community groups and train in Shared Reading if you'd like to lead one yourself
- Generous holiday entitlement.
- Beautiful Head Office location at Calderstones Mansion House, in the middle of Calderstones Park. Here you can benefit from walking meetings in one of Liverpool's largest parks and staff discounts in our café and ice cream parlour.
- Great colleagues – you'll be working with a whole range of supportive, creative colleagues who bring insight into our digital products and their users.

## **Knowledge and Skills**

- Inspiring young people to love reading and to feel confident and relaxed in the company of books
- Being a lively, engaging, enthusiastic presence to deliver all aspects of Storybarn programming; to encourage children to engage as fully as possible with the experience
- Creating an exciting, stimulating environment, whether in and around the Storybarn, or virtually, to encourage children to make meaningful connections with books and stories. This may involve using props such as puppets, musical instruments and other items to stimulate creative play
- Leading delivery of curriculum based workshops for school groups
- Leading delivery of a varied programme of sessions and events for babies, children and families across The Storybarn, The Mansion House, Calderstones Park and online using streaming technology
- Bringing energy, warmth and enthusiasm as the host of Storybarn birthday parties, whether this is a virtual, or physical party experience
- An awareness of and active commitment to upholding our safeguarding policies and procedures

## **Leadership and People Management**

- Take the lead of groups of up to 30 adults/children and demonstrate best practise in managing group dynamic across all elements of delivery

## **Communication**

- Contributing to creating creative content for social media / Reader Magazine as and where appropriate.
- Ensuring timely communication of relevant issues/updates to management team as required and a commitment to attending quarterly team meeting and attending any scheduled training appropriate to the role
- A responsibility and commitment to reporting any Health and Safety concerns

## **Liaison and Networking**

- To be point of contact for visiting partner groups such as schools/ third sector organizations.
- To be the face of The Reader and represent the organization through leading on delivery.

## **Planning and Organising**

- Maintaining excellent customer service by providing a warm welcome and a safe, friendly and vibrant environment for all visitors
- General housekeeping duties including opening/securing of premises, managing daily bookings list, ensuring resources are prepared, supplies topped up and that the barn is clean, tidy and well presented for delivery
- To support the development of content for our social media channels, specifically our regular weekly Facebook feature. This includes preparing and filming content.



### **Initiative and Problem Solving**

- To react and respond to the day-to-day public and group demands that occur. This could include having to change timings/ locations for delivery based on internal or external factors.

### **Decision Making and Freedom to Act**

- With the support of the Storybarn Coordinator & Storybarn Manager, contribute to operational decisions that may have public facing reputational risk for The Reader & the Storybarn.
- Ensure the Storybarn & Hideout spaces are secured each day, in-line with the close-down procedure, and that the keys are stored in the appropriate location.

### **Teamworking and Collaboration**

- Work collaboratively with the CYP team to ensure that a multitude of project demands for Storybarn activity meet necessary project outcomes
- Play an active role in the wider Children & Young People's team and maintain a commitment to diversity, equity and equality through all strands of delivery.

### **Person Specification**

- A genuine willingness to work as part of a lively team to help the Storybarn project evolve and develop in the most exciting and positive ways
- Able to adapt and change delivery in response to audience, unsupervised and self-motivated including the flexibility to work weekends on a rota basis
- Committed to providing excellent customer service
- Experience of working/volunteering with children
- Excellent at reading aloud
- Confident in dealing with the sometimes challenging behaviours of children
- A flexible, playful and caring approach to working with children
- Self-motivated with the ability to work unsupervised
- Able to engage with parents, carers and teachers in a relaxed, open and non-judgemental manner
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills
- Excellent timekeeping skills and the ability to remain calm under pressure
- Proficient in the use of MS office and willing to learn other IT systems and software as we look to further develop our virtual offer (E.g. Zoom)
- Excellent knowledge of children's literature
- A background in children's books/ performing arts/music

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# 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](http://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.



Find us @thereaderorg



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