

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.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROGRAMMES MANAGER

HOURS/FTE: 0.8FTE / 28 hours per week

**REPORTS TO:
BASED:** Director of Literature (this role is a job share alongside another
Criminal Justice Programmes Manager)
Remote

CONTRACT: Maternity Cover (starting January 2027)
SALARY: £29,512.19 (pro rata)

CLOSING DATE: 9am, Friday 30th October 2026

**VACANCY REF
CODE:** MA_3010262

The purpose of this role is to lead and manage a national, remote team to deliver Shared Reading sessions within a large number (currently 35) criminal justice and high security environments across England.

The wide geographical spread of the justice settings and the delivery team involves substantial travel as part of this role, including visits to groups and attending PIPE induction days to present Shared Reading to new PIPE staff. This contributes to the criminal justice re-commissioning process, ensuring our work continues in this sector and benefits those that need it most.

This role is responsible for the day to day operational management and delivery of an HMPPS contract which sees us deliver 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. Alongside the other CJ Manager you will be responsible for compiling and submitting monthly and annual reports to update on the progress and impact of the projects.

This role has specific responsibility for organising and supporting CJ Read to Lead courses to train new Group Leads and Prison Officers in our Shared Reading model. Working closely with the commissioner you will lead on the application process and liaise with the Shared Reading Practice Team to plan regular Read to Lead courses (3 times a year)

Key Responsibilities:

Knowledge and Skills

- Project management skills
- Able to demonstrate an understanding of the sensitivity of settings under this department, the specific needs of those residing within them, and the challenges of working within such settings.
- Work with The Reader's Equity, Diversity and Inclusion strategy to ensure our offer, practices and people are representative of all communities
- Hold an overview of all UK CJ contracts and relationships, establishing excellent relationships in keeping with TR's ethos, values and practice. Connect with a range of stakeholders, in line with strategic and operational plans, to meet agreed outputs and outcomes across operational geography as well as negotiate recommissions, leading with impact.
- Hold key organisational information regarding group, volunteer and participant location, activity and impact across the sector
- Plan and arrange presentations to raise the profile of our work amongst stakeholders
- Finding creative solutions to partner queries, needs and requirements within the parameters of the role and available resources
- Co-design cross-organisational structures, processes and working practices (eg through the gate model)
- IT Skills: responsibility for accurate CRM data regarding all stakeholders and activity; run regular reports to demonstrate progress against contractual obligations
- Literary Skills: a strong understanding of Shared Reading and how literature can work to improve people's lives, along with the ability to articulate this well
- Contribute to The annual Reader Bookshelf, using your experience to suggest books, poems or plays you believe would work well in Shared Reading

Leadership and People Management

- Manage a team of (currently 19) CJ Group leads, including objective setting and development reviews, staff support and supervision, ensuring CRM database records are up to date and that monitoring and evaluation takes place when required, while also dealing with day to day issues and concerns
- Plan and Deliver In Person Team Days to build connection across the team, share learning and disseminate organisational training/development opportunities
- Undertake The Reader's Read to Lead training with a view to progressing to the Teaching Associate Pathway and holding responsibility for the literary expertise and quality of CJ team members as required

Communication

- Manage relationships with the Clinical and Operational Leads within settings, ensuring risk assessments are completed and up to date and Service Delivery Agreements drawn up and signed by both parties in a timely manner
- Communicate effectively, both internally and externally across diverse - potentially reluctant – audiences
- Report regularly to commissioners, colleagues and when required Board members both verbally and in writing via regular reports

Liaison and Networking

- Maintain excellent, fruitful relationships with funders, commissioners and partner organisations, and stay abreast of and contribute to sector trends, learning and subsequent programme (re)design.
- Identify opportunities for TR to raise the profile and/or reach of our activity and workshop with appropriate teams/individuals

Planning and Organising

- Monitor agreed operational targets and contract milestones across a broad geography and multiple contracts, ensuring delivery outputs do not fall below the required threshold, producing high quality reports on activity and findings for funders
- Implement organisation evaluation mechanisms to evidence project impact to commissioners

Initiative and Problem Solving

- Responsible for solving day to day problems from within the team, and also to respond to challenges with creative potential solutions for discussion with Director of Literature

Teamworking and Collaboration

- Work with the Director of Literature to ensure smooth project management, CJ programmes development, organisational learning and demonstrate impact/escalate difficulties as required
- Liaise and collaborate with other departments as required (ie Literary Content, Shared Reading Practice, Communications, Development) and external partners to good effect and ongoing improvement.
- Able to overcome geographical distance to create a supportive, productive and cohesive team working to timeline and agreed targets across multiple contracts
- Provide leadership and direction to the CJ Team, delegating tasks as appropriate
- Co-curate, plan and deliver creative events and experiences for diverse audiences and purposes audiences
- Carry out responsibilities in line with Teaching Associate role as/if required

Person Specification:

- Can demonstrate an understanding of the sensitivity of settings under this department and the specific needs of those residing within them
- Excellent communication skills, across diverse modes, audiences and purposes
- Have good IT skills; you will be required to train others in our IT systems
- Have proven experience of managing people
- Are self-motivated and able to motivate others
- Able to work independently
- Experienced in dealing with difficult situations
- Can work flexibly as required
- Have emotional resilience and maturity, knows when to speak up
- Able to manage a demanding workload and assist others in doing the same
- Understands and able to model TR's values
- Able to undertake nationwide travel
- Have IT facilities available for home working
- Able to establish and maintain excellent partner organisation relationships
- Can demonstrate a desire and capacity to go over and above 'the basics' in service of populations living in prison
- Have experience of working within the CJ sector and have an awareness of sector trends and policies affecting work in this sector
- Able to demonstrate a rich reading life and an understanding of the difference great writing can make within these services

If you're inspired by our mission, are looking for a new challenge, and want to work for a forward-thinking organisation at a really interesting time, we'd love to hear from you. Please send your completed application forms to laurakershaw@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.



Find us @thereaderorg



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