

Head of Partnerships Development

BookTrust

BookTrust is the UK's largest children's reading charity. We get millions of children reading, regularly and by choice – especially those from low-income families or vulnerable backgrounds.

At BookTrust, we know that children who read regularly are happier and healthier, they form stronger bonds, they are more creative and enjoy more success in life. Equally importantly, we know that something profound happens in those magical moments when an adult and child share a story together. Reading supports bonding, stability, identity, social and emotional growth and attainment. In many ways, sharing stories is a protective factor against the adversity that some children experience, helping them feel secure and loved.

We deliver our mission through evidence-informed interventions that reach over 1.4 million children and families a year, with a strong focus on the early years. Our carefully selected books and well-researched programmes are delivered by a network of over 7,000 local partners, bringing the magic of reading to children in every community in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We work with every local authority across England and Wales, as well as health visitors, schools, libraries, social workers and early years workers. We also have an excellent and increasingly diverse community of children's authors and illustrators and committed and expert support from publishers.

Our work

Our new strategy 2025-30 has set out our ambitions for deepening the impact of our scaled early years programmes and the development and growth of our work to support children from vulnerable family backgrounds and in schools.

Through our Bookstart work in the early years we reach 90% of newborn babies and nearly half a million children aged 1-4 with our Toddler and Pre-schooler work. This work is delivered by local networks of partners from across sectors such as Health, Early Years Education, Communities and libraries and hyper local initiatives.

Through sustaining, developing and creating new opportunities within our partner networks we can bring even greater impact for our Bookstart delivery, ensuring that we have both effective routes to reaching families through partners and also through ensuring our programmes are effective; in supporting our theory of change, by stakeholder insights and buy in, key relationships management, designing in key components and developing and sharing our research for maximum impact.

We are in the process of more closely aligning our work in the early years with our work to support children from vulnerable family backgrounds.

We have great foundations to build on, big ambitions to do more, and strong evidence that our work can make a transformative difference to the lives of children and families

across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. What we do has never mattered more – or been more needed. BookTrust is united by our commitment to this mission, and the opportunity to make a real difference.

This is a new role within the organisation and the new role holder will have a chance to shape and build the role over time. You will be a strong leader with great people skills - experience of working with and leading teams working in geographically dispersed locations is advantageous.

You will have a clear experience the public sector landscape with a track record of relationships building, and an understanding of the local government policy landscape. With a collaborative approach to working across interconnecting complex work areas, you will be comfortable working within a matrix style of management for your own direct reports and those of other teams.

You may have charity or statutory setting experience, and will have the ability to set out a strategic direction for partnerships team members as well as being hands on in developing new relationships to support our work as well as being able to produce high quality written materials, analyse complex data and respond dynamically to a changing external landscape.

You will be an excellent communicator who manages up effectively and who is comfortable working across a matrixed managed team. You will have the ability to work closely with the Director of Partnerships in building relationships, and developing and delivering on strategies that support impact in our early years programmes by guiding the work of our partnerships team. You will be working closely with key role holders such as but not confined to the Head of Partnerships Delivery, and Head of Programme for Vulnerable Children.

Job Purpose

The Head of Partnerships Development will ensure increasingly effective pathways to families by setting out ways of working that ensure delivery teams can access these routes, influence decision makers and develop and build the right relationships for greatest impact.

Along with the Director of partnerships the role holder will aim to both influence and respond to central, local and regional policy initiatives in the sector to support BookTrust's mission to get all children reading, especially those from low income and vulnerable family backgrounds.

The role holder will ensure internal stakeholders are briefed on the local government landscape and that risks and opportunities are clearly articulated.

This work spans the organisation – from within our partnerships team to our research and impact, communications and external affairs, design and innovation, growth planning, communications, profile-raising and income generation – and requires strong collaborative working to draw on skills and capacity in all these areas.

The role will work internally and externally to ensure the right inputs to ensure success for our scaled programmes, supporting everything from design to upskilling our team and relationship building across the local government and regional and country landscape.

This role will report to the Director of Partnerships (who is a member of the Executive Leadership team and the organisational sponsor for our early years work), alongside the Head of Partnerships development and the Head of Vulnerable Children who together form the senior team for our partnerships delivery and development in the early years and for vulnerable children.

KEY REQUIREMENTS AND AREAS OF ACTIVITY (NB: It is important to note that these requirements are also supported by the work of teams across the wider organisation, role holder will hold joint accountability for much of this work with other leaders. BookTrust is a relatively small and highly interconnected organisation, requiring true commitment to collaboration.)

1. Developing our partnership routes for delivery of BookTrust programmes, building relationships with which to influence the efficacy of intended routes and creating effective pathways for delivery teams to work with and through, increasing the impact of our scaled delivery work.
2. Support the development of our vulnerable children work, ensuring joined up ways of working with our early years delivery and relationships.
3. Design and lead on team development in relation to programme delivery pathways and relationships development, to ensure they are confident and well equipped to deliver in a challenging and often changing environment.
4. With the Head of Partnerships delivery, further develop the quality of our scaled delivery internal reporting so that data can be used to support our development, as part of briefings, bids and reporting.
5. Grow BookTrust's profile and presence within the local government landscape by working collaboratively across teams.
6. Support the Head of Partnerships Delivery in overseeing the project management of our early years workstreams within the governance structure, specifically by ensuring join up between organisational development projects and existing delivery
7. Strengthen our stakeholder engagement and relationships, building out our local government presence, prioritising and planning where key relationships are needed.
8. Raise the profile of children's reading in the early years by building a diverse network of partners and supporters, feeding into our evolving communications strategy to ensure effective external voice and through ensuring the work of the partnerships team forms and impactful part of our storytelling.
9. Leading BookTrust's Advisory Group of specialist practitioners.
10. Support and seek opportunities to grow our income, share and take part in learning and research and influence the landscape of children's reading especially for those families on lower incomes..

Cross-organisational requirement	What this means for this role	Other key activity to draw on
<p>Increasing impact by broadening and deepening our relationships and applying mechanisms for reading ever more effectively across our work in scaled delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working internally and externally to ensure effective routes to families through partners that maximise on our impact. Managing stakeholder plans, supporting development of key relationships, especially with key decision makers in local government. Working closely with our Research and Impact team our Development and Innovation team, to support translation of partner insights into our programme design. Facilitating and championing our focus on co-creation. Supporting cross team working between staff delivering on core early years delivery and those working on our vulnerable children programmes – working to reduce silos and ensuring opportunities and relationships are maximised. 	<p>Our regional relationships are extensive.</p> <p>Our Research and Impact team has a significant learning programme in this area.</p> <p>Our network of sector groups, charitable orgs and reading specific orgs is building.</p> <p>Our new Head of Programme for Vulnerable Children role will work closely to support both our early years and vulnerable children work.</p>
<p>Ensure excellent customer experiences in relation to our programme delivery to support our impact.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting out team development, supporting and guiding teams and individuals to deliver. With the Head of Partnerships Delivery, driving development of our internal systems to continue to improve interaction for our partners. Ensuring excellent communication with our partners through the regular direct contact the partnerships teams have with them, creating consistency and ensuring partners are heard. Supporting and feeding into the wider organisational communications planning and opportunities, ensuring they are fit for purpose in relation to supporting our scaled delivery and partner network. 	<p>Our communication and external affairs work is building and our external profile is a key element in supporting our broad organisational objectives as well as those specific to our scaled programmes.</p>
<p>Programme delivery.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the team to ensure strategic priorities can be met, in particular growing our presence in multi-agency working and those organisations that will support reach to mis-served families. Work to build advocacy for BookTrust's early years work, setting out and delivering on initiatives that can have impact, such as presence 	<p>Working across the organisation to strengthen existing delivery partnerships and build new ones. Working with partners across the local government landscape to ensure BookTrust's work is prioritised.</p> <p>Our CRM and reporting is under development to better support our partners and internal stakeholders, working to develop our systems to</p>

	<p>in local authority strategies that connect to our work, for example.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working to guide the partnerships team to meet our organisational outcomes, developments and ways of working. 	<p>ensure we are equipped with high quality information.</p>
<p>Supporting our learning and development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting learning and evaluation of our scaled programmes through promotion and influencing with our partner networks. 	<p>Working collaboratively and methodically with our learning and evaluation team and our design and innovation team.</p>

In addition to responsibilities relating to the delivery of the above requirements, the postholder will need to be committed to their own personal development; promote BookTrust and its vision and values in all activities, both internally while carrying out duties and externally with stakeholders and the general public; and carry out all duties in line with BookTrust policies and procedures, being prepared to undertake additional reasonable duties as required.

The postholder will report to: the Director of Partnerships.

Location: The role is national, managing teams in Northern Ireland, Wales and across England. You will need to be able to work at one of our BookTrust offices in London, Leeds, Belfast or Cardiff for an average of 8 days per month whilst some of these collaboration days may be worked in partner locations, at events or stakeholder meetings in any part of the country. The position will require regular travel to BookTrust office bases and to visit and engage as needed.

Contract: Part-time, permanent (hours and working pattern to be agreed with the successful applicant).

PERSON SPECIFICATION

EXPERIENCE

Essential (*assessed through shortlisting and interviews*)

- A track record of leading teams to deliver programmes and relationship building.
- Experience in leading and working across multiple strands of activity within a programme of work, spotting interdependencies, opportunities and risks.
- Experience of managing and leading people.
- Experience of delivery in a public sector or purpose-led organisation, and across a complex system.
- Key experience in developing / executing:
 - Long-term planning for change and delivery
 - Effective programmes to deliver impact-led outcomes
- Experience of leading through change
- Experience of delivering outcomes through partnership with other individuals, sectors or organisations.
- Demonstrable experience of strong collaborative working behaviours.

Desirable

- Experience of leading a geographically-dispersed team.
- Experience of working at national level.
- Experience of the early years / early health sectors.
- Experience of working to secure funding, spotting opportunities, making connections and pitching ideas and feeding into fundraising bids and initiatives.

SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES

Essential (*assessed through shortlisting and interview*)

- Committed to our mission of getting disadvantaged children reading, with high levels of integrity
- Confident influencer, with excellent interpersonal and communicative style
- Effective collaborator with internal and external stakeholders
- Ability to nurture and develop an excellent team and able to lead a cross-organisational team and work in a matrix style.
- Ability to oversee project workstreams within a wider governance structure, managing opportunities and risk management.
- Excellent analytical skills and ability to distil complex information into strong, cohesive reporting.
- Comfortable in leading change and working within a changing context, and able to handle ambiguity in support of complex decisions
- Strategic and analytical – comfortable with data and attention to detail, ensuring that delivery is guided by impact
- Commitment to, and role modelling working in, an inclusive way and committed to BookTrust's valuing and development of diversity
- Comfortable in working in medium sized organisation (c.100 people) which works at national level and at scale

Terms and Conditions

- Salary: £65,000 to £68,000 (pro-rata)
- 28 days holiday, plus public holidays
- Pension scheme – 7% employer contribution
- 3 x salary life assurance
- Employee Assistance Programme
- Season Ticket Loan Scheme
- Flexible working scheme

Want to join us? Find out more about who we are at: <https://www.booktrust.org.uk/about-us/work-at-booktrust/>

To apply, you must submit your CV and attach a covering letter of no more than two pages outlining your suitability in relation to the person specification.

Our Commitment to Diversity and Inclusivity

We aim to provide an inclusive recruitment process and actively welcome applications from diverse talent pools: minority ethnic candidates, candidates with disabilities and long-term conditions and candidates from underrepresented communities.

We are committed to equality of opportunity and want to ensure we have an accessible application process for all candidates. If you need any reasonable adjustments or would like us to do anything differently during the application process, please contact our HR team on HR@booktrust.org.uk or 020 7801 8855/8856 to discuss your requirements further.

BookTrust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The recruitment and selection process reflect our commitment to safeguarding therefore, the suitability of all prospective employees will be assessed during the recruitment process in line with this commitment, and pre-employment checks.