

# Shannon Trust Reading Specialist Lead HMP The Verne Recruitment pack



Nobody left out of learning

## About us

Shannon Trust is a charity that transforms lives by supporting people to learn to read and improve other basic skills. We believe nobody should be left out of learning. We operate in all prisons across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. We also work with a number of partner organisations in the community, supporting their service users to learn to read.

Over 50% of people in prison, and 16% in the community, have a literacy level below that of an 11 year old. Many cannot read at all. This means they have reduced access to education, training and rehabilitation programmes which could transform their lives, and give them hope for a better future outside of the criminal justice system

Many of our employees work remotely, with colleagues currently based in all parts of the country, from the North East to the South West and all points in between. We've always supported home working, so you can be assured we know how to make you feel welcome and part of the team. We also have prison based colleagues who do a fantastic job of growing our programmes in their prisons. We arrange in person meetings twice a year as a full staff team.

Our family friendly employee benefits includes flexible working, a generous holiday allowance, Employee Assistance Programme and employee discount scheme.

"I didn't think that at the age of 72 it was going to be worthwhile. I have now been reading for 2 years and enjoying it."  
Shannon Trust learner



## Our purpose, vision, mission and values

### Purpose

We support people in the criminal justice system to learn to read, and improve other basic skills so they can pursue wider opportunities and thrive in the community

### Vision

A future where everyone can experience the positive impact of learning

### Mission

To connect the power of volunteers, mentors and partners to offer a range of effective, accessible and flexible learning opportunities in prisons and the community

### Values

At Shannon Trust, we value:

#### The individual

We are supportive and non-judgmental – with our learners, mentors, volunteers and each other. By focusing on learners' unique and individual needs, we can grow skills and confidence so they can reach their full potential.

#### Collaboration

We can't achieve our vision alone, so we are resourceful and collaborative. By working with mentors, volunteers and partner organisations, we can ensure our programmes are widely accessible across the criminal justice system and communities.

#### Inventiveness

We know reading can be the first step to transforming lives, yet we also recognise wider needs. Ambitious, energetic and creative, we take a learner-led approach to innovation to increase the breadth and impact of our work.

### Beliefs






We believe that...

- nobody should be left out of learning
- self-belief is essential to personal growth
- learning can increase confidence, transform lives and reduce reoffending










## Looking after our people

At Shannon Trust, we value great people that work hard and have the skills and abilities to make a difference. We know the work we do can be challenging, so we want to recognise and reward our team members for their dedication. Our employee benefits package puts you front and centre, so you feel valued working with us.

### Pay and other benefits

 <p><b>Living Wage employer</b> We are an accredited Living Wage employer.</p>	 <p><b>Pension scheme</b> We will contribute up to 5% towards your pension, provided you contribute 7%.</p>	 <p><b>Working from home</b> Employees that are required to work from home will receive an annual tax free allowance.</p>
 <p><b>Reward Gateway</b> Our employee discount platform is available to all Shannon Trust employees.</p>	 <p><b>Death in service</b> Should the worst happen, your nominated beneficiaries will receive a payment of 2 x your salary.</p>	

### Putting you first

 <p>Generous annual holiday allowance (30 days FTE).</p>	 <p>Flexible working, subject to the requirements of your role.</p>	 <p>We will pay for you to have an annual flu jab.</p>
 <p>We will contribute up to £100 per year to support your mental and physical wellbeing.</p>	 <p>You will have access to a confidential and independent 24/7 helpline with qualified counsellors and advisors.</p>	 <p>We will pay for you to have a standard annual eye test and contribute £50 towards glasses or contact lenses if needed.</p>
 <p>Once you've passed your probationary period, you will get 6 weeks of sick pay at full pay, then 6 weeks at half pay. We also support our staff with up to 5 days of paid compassionate leave, if it's needed.</p>	 <p>In recognition of the importance of volunteering, you can take 2 days per year as paid leave to volunteer for other charities or voluntary groups.</p>	 <p>We support parents and families with enhanced maternity, adoption and paternity leave, which is also available to same sex parents on the same basis.</p>

Find out more about our [employee benefits on our website](#).

## Key information

Location:	HMP The Verne
Reporting to:	Regional Manager
Hours:	Full Time (35 hours per week)
Salary:	£33,000 per year

## Role summary

Shannon Trust's vision is of a future where everyone can experience the positive impact of learning. As a Reading Specialist Lead, your role is to make this a reality by ensuring that there is a clear, person-centred plan for reaching all learners to engage them with reading and to create new initiatives to inspire a culture of reading within the prison. We want you to be creative and innovative to develop engaging and meaningful initiatives that have shared ownership between people in prison and prison staff. You will be working onsite at the prison and will work closely to collaborate with people in prison, prison officers, prison education staff, library staff, workshop/industry staff, Shannon Trust team members and regional manager. Reading in prison is recognised by Ofsted and HMIP as an essential skill that must be developed and encouraged for all people in prison and in this role you will play a key part in being able to help drive this in a way that really works for people in custody.

### Core objectives of the role

- To develop a clear action plan to help support and deliver the Prison Reading Strategy
- To work with people in prison to create new initiatives that will help to engage learners at all levels which develop their own reading skills both on a 1:1 basis and in groups
- To support delivery of reading initiatives across the prison to help prioritise the importance of reading for both functional life skills, wellbeing and to develop a culture of learning
- To manage a case load of up to 20 learners working below Level 1 identified as needing 1:1 specialist support, using a phonics based approach to develop their skills
- To work alongside our current Prison Facilitator who manages our 1:1 peer mentoring programme for literacy and numeracy

## Our values

At Shannon Trust we value the individual. We are supportive and non-judgmental – with our learners, mentors, volunteers and each other.

We work with many people across the criminal justice system and beyond, supporting them to improve their basic literacy and numeracy skills. Developing those skills is critical in reducing re-offending and improving life chances. We want to take every step possible to encourage those with lived experience into employment.

We are an accredited 'Ban the Box' employer, meaning we do not ask applicants to declare convictions at the application or interview stage. We only ask for this information where necessary for the role, and not until after an offer of employment has been made.

If a role involves prison security vetting, it's important to acknowledge that this process can involve lengthy wait times for the vetting to be completed, particularly for candidates with lived experience. At Shannon Trust, we're here to stand by our candidates, offering support every step of the way.

## How to apply

- [find out more and apply](#)

Closing date: 8 May 2024

Interviews to be held 15 May 2024 (venue to be confirmed)

## Job description

### Planning

- Completion of an initial full picture review of all existing reading interventions across the prison. This involves working with people in prison and prison staff via focus groups, one to ones and surveys to gain their views and assess current activities.
- Gain a full understanding of the existing prison reading strategy, working with prison education staff to understand current delivery.
- Work collaboratively with prison staff in all departments to understand current reading support and to look for new ideas to engage prisoners with reading.
- Identify current systems for reading assessment (initial assessments/reading assessments etc.) and referral routes for learners.
- Create working business plan with clear timeframes and priorities

### Delivery

- Work collaboratively with people in prison to create new initiatives to engage people with reading, this could include book groups, book of the month, reading clubs etc.
- Adapt ideas to ensure learners at all levels feel listened to and have active ownership of a range of initiatives
- Creatively work together with people in prison, and prison staff, to create opportunities for them to work together (e.g. reader in residence, new reading roles for people in prison or champions/ambassadors)
- Work with a roll on/roll off caseload of up to 20 low-literacy people in prison, supporting them with engaging in newly developed phonics-based interventions that are aligned to their motivations for improving their reading, both 1:1 or in small groups, outside of classroom environment (on wings/in workshops and workspaces)
- Provide a full 1:1 support plan for each individual working as part of your caseload with meaningful goals and a clear plan for achievement of these
- Work towards a 'whole prison approach' where each department understands and feels ownership of the initiatives to support reading in their area
- Engage and inspire people to understand what reading means to them and identify ways to make it meaningful for all
- Show understanding of the stigma and challenges faced by people who find reading more difficult and work sensitively to engage them in new initiatives
- Work collaboratively with prison education team, library team and Neurodiversity Support Manager to ensure a joined up approach
- As required, lead on prison reading meetings for staff to share good practice
- Ensure you are up to date on the wider National Prison Reading group and strategy, keeping up to date with any new updates/good practice
- Find practical solutions to operational/regime challenges that work for all involved, e.g. people in prison and wing staff
- Create opportunities for shared learning among the wider Shannon Trust team and across other prisons in the area

- Produce promotional materials including a monthly newsletter showcasing newly developed projects, initiatives and reading materials, as well as feedback captured and highlighting outcomes achieved, with an emphasis on promoting the importance and benefits of reading
- Attend key staff meetings to involve in the development and implementation of the reading strategy. Deliver training/information sessions to prison staff members to help increase knowledge around low literacy levels and to encourage referrals and develop a collaborative culture that raises the profile of reading
- Work with allocations/activity hubs/education/library and other areas to ensure any planned activities can happen as part of the prison regime
- Work in line with Shannon Trust's ethos of 'learner choice', ensuring multiple options for learning are available
- Promote the positive working culture of Shannon Trust across all interactions with people in prison and with staff
- Represent Shannon Trust at appropriate meetings and events

## Reporting

- Utilise systems (Nomis, Curious, Shannon Trust database/spreadsheets) to record activity and to update Prisoner Case Notes to record progress
- Provide relevant and timely reports about the reading interventions and one to one caseload to the prison's learning and skills manager and Shannon Trust regional manager. This includes numbers of learners and progression and impact measures, both quantitative and qualitative, including case studies.
- Contribute to quarterly contract review meetings and detail progress against agreed KPI's
- Work in partnership with relevant Shannon Trust criminal justice services in the community to develop referral pathways for mentors and learners to continue learning with Shannon Trust through the gate where appropriate
- Help to assist in the preparation of evidence for Ofsted/HMIP inspections
- Embed a tracking system to record educational progression outcomes

## Other

- Put the learner at the heart of what you do, actively contribute to a culture of learning, reflection, team work and development, in line with the organisation's values
- Participate in regular one-to-ones and annual reviews, contributing to the identification of objectives and professional development goals
- Carry out health and safety responsibilities in accordance with the Health & Safety Policy
- Comply with all prison rules regarding safety and security
- To undertake other duties and responsibilities commensurate with the role, as may be reasonably required by Shannon Trust or as a mutually agreed development opportunity. This document will be subject to periodic review in consultation with the job holder



- Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults is a core responsibility of all staff. Staff are expected to alert their line manager to any concerns they may have regarding the abuse or inappropriate treatment of a Child or Young Person, or Vulnerable Adults

## Person specification

### Experience

Essential requirements	Desirable requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>You must hold a relevant teaching qualification (Level 5 and above, or equivalent e.g. Cert Ed, DTTLs, PGCE) and have experience of supporting people to learn to read using a phonics based approach</li> <li>Experience managing a wide range of relationships at different levels, including building partnerships and working collaboratively with colleagues and external agencies</li> <li>Demonstrable experience of creating new initiatives and leading on projects independently, managing your own workload</li> <li>Experience of working with people who are neurodiverse or may have other types of specialist learning needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Previous lived experience and/or employment/volunteering experience in the criminal justice system (prison, probation or voluntary sector)</li> <li>Experience of Ofsted/HMIP inspections and knowledge of current prison inspection framework and guidance around good practice for promoting a reading culture in prison</li> <li>Experience of person-centred programmes and of co-designed interventions incorporating ideas from participants e.g. people in prison</li> <li>Experience of working with adults in a learning environment</li> </ul>

### Skills and abilities

Essential requirements	Desirable requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Excellent communication skills including strong listening skills with the ability to adjust your communication style to different audiences, including people in prison and volunteers, prison governors and staff</li> <li>Ability to be creative and try new things, to not be afraid to 'give it a go' and to learn from outcomes, both positive and negative</li> <li>Good organisational and planning skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ability to write a strategy involving multiple departments/teams</li> <li>Experience using databases for effective record keeping.</li> </ul>

Essential requirements	Desirable requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ability to inspire others and lead in a positive and inclusive way which enables others and helps raise self-esteem</li> <li>• Strong time management skills, with the ability to prioritise your workload, meet deadlines, work autonomously and balance the needs of multiple programmes and priorities.</li> <li>• Able to build positive relationships throughout the prison and within Shannon Trust</li> <li>• Ability to write clear, succinct reports, emails and other key communications.</li> <li>• Ability to work in a results focused way, with a focus on the best outcomes for learners</li> <li>• Ability to foster and demonstrate the values, aims and objectives of Shannon Trust in your work</li> <li>• Ability to demonstrate the appropriate attributes required to facilitate programmes within a prison environment</li> </ul>	

## Knowledge and understanding

Essential requirements	Desirable requirements
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding of the reasons why adults might not be able to read, and the personal and practical barriers to engaging with education faced by people in prison and the community</li> <li>• Knowledge and understanding of the criminal justice system</li> <li>• IT literate with experience of using Microsoft Office</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience using databases for effective record keeping.</li> </ul>

## Personal characteristics

### Essential requirements

- Proactive, solution focused, patient and professional.
- Creative and willing to try new things
- Performance minded and results orientated, with learners at the heart of what you do.
- Non-judgemental attitude towards working with people in prison and/or on probation. Committed to anti-discriminatory and inclusive working practices.
- Approachable and able to form positive working relationships.
- The right to work in the UK.
- Able to travel independently to designated prison and occasional staff meetings in a central location.
- Appointment will be dependent upon successful security vetting by His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service.