

Research and Impact Lead - Job Description

BookTrust is the UK's largest children's reading charity. We get millions of children reading, especially those from low-income families or vulnerable backgrounds. Children who choose to read and who read regularly are happier and healthier. They form stronger bonds and relationships. They do better at school and are more creative. They enjoy more success in life. This is why we work with families, supporting them to start sharing stories and books together from the earliest possible age. Our carefully selected books and well-researched programmes are delivered by thousands of local partners, bringing the magic of reading to children in every community in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

This is a brilliant time to join BookTrust's Research and Impact team. As an organisation we have undergone a major transformation to deliver our new strategy's focus on supporting low income and vulnerable children and families on their reading journeys. We have embedded a theory of change and strong MEL culture within the organisation. We have a learning plan for the year ahead, full of learning needs and activities. These activities involve deep collaboration with colleagues with expertise in design and innovation, fundraising, children's books, profile, and policy work, and with our partnerships team who work with our extensive network of delivery partners.

Excellent research and MEL are central to BookTrust's goals to strengthen our impact for children and families, and to building our profile, public affairs, and income generation work in support of our overall mission.

Contact type: Full time, permanent

Salary: £46,000-£53,000 per year (depending on experience)

Location: Hybrid with minimum 8 office days per month in either London or Leeds office

Research and Impact at BookTrust

The need for the highest quality learning and evidence-led decision making is required across our work. Unlike many charities BookTrust conducts much of its co-creation, research, and evaluation work in-house. We have a skilled and ambitious team of 7 research and impact staff and work closely with colleagues across the organisation for whom learning is also central to their roles. Our business plan sets out a series of learning activities and processes that we need to deliver including:

- Ongoing work to strengthen our MEL approach
- Major national studies with our partners and low income families
- A longitudinal feasibility study with low income early years families
- Evaluation of current and new interventions for early years and vulnerable families based on learning activities (qualitative, quantitative, creative learning approaches and desk review) with families and partners (partners include: early years and vulnerable families specialists, schools, local authorities, other charities)
- Building our understanding of our external landscape and ongoing review of external evidence
- Bringing in external research perspectives and learning partnerships to build the profile of our research and further build our external credibility

Key responsibilities

We are looking for dynamic and collaborative Research and Impact Lead who has the experience and expertise to:

1. Have oversight of our MEL approach – ensuring excellence in this and working with leaders in the R&I team and colleagues across BookTrust to ensure evidence and our Theory of Change are consistently at the heart of decision making.
2. Contribute to a portfolio of cross departmental learning activities – working to deliver research activities or supporting colleagues in R&I through providing steer and quality assurance.
3. Scope, activate and oversee new learning partnerships with academics and other partner organisations, and develop or contribute to research funding applications.
4. Lead on the production of insight and evidence ‘products’ for external audience.
5. Work within R&I leadership to shape and deliver our Learning Plan, vision and standards within the team.
6. Lead cross organisational workstreams.
7. Deliver leadership activities within the R&I team.
8. Contribute to business planning, decision making and fundraising processes, bringing timely, relevant and high-quality evidence into these processes.

Key priorities across this work will include:

- Ensuring our portfolio of activities is designed, delivered, analysed and actioned in a way that is coherent and impactful, working closely with our team of researchers providing expertise, quality assurance and team development.
- Working with the Director and Head of Research and Impact and other leaders within BookTrust to spot opportunities, set ambitions and define objectives for new learning activities.
- Developing and delivering new learning partnerships working with academics, funders and other partner organisations.

The Research and Impact Lead will need to carry out all duties in line with BookTrust policies and procedures and be prepared to undertake additional reasonable duties as required

PERSON SPECIFICATION

The successful candidate will be an outstanding and motivated mixed methods researcher, excellent collaborator and communicator.

CRITERIA	E or D
1. Knowledge	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Understanding of challenges facing low income and/or vulnerable families b. Understanding of behaviour change c. Understanding of the UK charity sector d. Understanding of early years, schools and children’s social care sectors 	<p style="text-align: center;">D E D D</p>
2. Experience	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. An excellent mixed methods research skills with a minimum of 3 years experience in taking overall end to end accountability for large scale research and evaluation projects (from identifying objectives and developing the most appropriate approaches, to delivery of learning activities, through to complex analysis and production of robust, engaging research outputs, generation and sharing of recommendations) b. Experience of communicating research effectively and for action with a wide range of audiences (policy makers, leaders in other charities, funders, cross function internal teams, public) c. Experience with evaluation frameworks d. Experience of developing and using Theories of Change e. Experience of conducting research and evaluation with children, families or disadvantaged groups f. Experience of working in cross function teams g. Experience of working in partnership with external organisations h. Experience of working on winning fundraising bids / research proposals i. Experience of working across multiple large-scale projects simultaneously j. Experience in creative methods of communication and dissemination (e.g. data visualisation, infographics, video/other digital methods etc.) k. Experience in facilitating internal analysis workshops to develop shared recommendations l. Experience with longitudinal approaches m. Experience of working on design / innovation projects 	<p style="text-align: center;">E E E E E E E D D D D D D</p>

3. Skills and Attributes

Essential skills and attributes:

- a) Excellent collaboration, partnership and influencing skills
- b) Excellent mixed methods research skills
- c) Ability to work at pace, across multiple priorities
- d) Excellent analysis, interpretation and storytelling skills
- e) Outstanding eye for detail in all work
- f) Outstanding written and editing skills
- g) Skilled in using insight, evidence and impact evaluation data to influence internal and external audiences
- h) Creative thinker with the ability to identify new approaches to deliver our learning needs
- i) Solutions focussed and able to respond effectively to challenges
- j) Strong project management skills
- k) Experience in supporting and coaching others on a range of skills
- l) Outstanding communication skills
- m) Flexibility and ability to embrace change, supporting colleagues to do so

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E = essential criteria

D = desirable criteria

Terms and Conditions

- 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

We will provide opportunities for the postholder to further develop their skills in support of a fast changing, purpose driven national charity. We offer a flexible and supportive working environment and can provide on-the job learning and formal training.

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 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.