Shannon Trust

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Volunteer Operations & Development Lead (Fixed term – Maternity Cover)

Recruitment pack









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.

Two-thirds of people in prison can't read, or struggle to. Even more people struggle with numeracy. This affects their ability to understand information, access services, and move forward. It creates barriers to rehabilitation, increases isolation, and limits opportunity.

Evidence shows that where strong reading cultures exist, outcomes improve. Where they do not, people are more likely to feel frustrated and disconnected.

One person learning to read or improve their numeracy has a big impact. The positive effects are felt by the people they interact with, their loved ones, and the wider community.

Many of our employees work remotely, with colleagues currently based in all parts of the country. 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 regular in person meetings as well, to help everyone keep in touch.

Our family friendly employee benefits include 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 vision, mission and values

Vision

A future where confidence with words and numbers unlocks access to connection, dignity, and opportunity.

Mission

We build reading, numeracy and life skills through mentor-led learning to help people fully participate in society.

The problem we are trying to solve

Difficulties with reading and numeracy are linked to worse life outcomes, including offending, and they undermine rehabilitation by limiting access to the information, services and decisions that shape everyday life. Without support, systems remain hard to navigate, and opportunities remain out of reach.

Values

At Shannon Trust, we value:

Respect
We treat everyone with fairness, kindness and understanding. We see people's potential, not just their circumstances.

Connection
Strong relationships make learning possible. We build trust, communicate openly, and work together with honesty and care.

Progress
We learn, adapt and improve; for the people we support, for ourselves, and for each other.

Belonging
Everyone has a place here. We include people, welcome difference, and remove barriers so everyone can contribute and succeed.

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



Find out more about our employee benefits on our website.

Key information

Salary: £25,460 per annum (FTE is £31,825)
Location: Homebased, with occasional travel across England and Wales.
Contract: Fixed term (twelve-month maternity cover)
Hours: 28 hours per week (0.8 FTE)
Reporting to: Head of Volunteering, Participation, & Engagement

Why Join Us?

Shannon Trust works with people in prison and the community to improve literacy through peer-to-peer learning. We believe everyone has the right to learn to read and have access to the opportunities that literacy brings.

As the organisation continues to expand its reach, diversify funding streams and strengthen its evidence base, we are seeking a Volunteer Operations & Development Lead.

Role Purpose

As the Volunteer Operations & Development Lead, you will manage and coordinate the delivery and continuous improvement of volunteering across Shannon Trust, ensuring volunteers have a high quality, consistent, and well-supported experience.

As the team's operational volunteering lead, you will provide specialist advice, guidance and support to colleagues working with volunteers, building confidence, consistency and good practice across the organisation. You will contribute to the ongoing development of volunteering, helping to ensure it remains sustainable, inclusive and responsive to organisational needs.

You will play a key role in creating a positive, inclusive and well-supported volunteering experience across Shannon Trust. Working with volunteers, managers and colleagues, you will lead the systems, processes and approaches that enable volunteering to thrive, from recruitment and onboarding through to learning, support, operational insight and continuous improvement.

Key Responsibilities

Volunteer Recruitment and Attraction

- Lead volunteer recruitment and attraction activity, helping to engage a diverse range of volunteers.
- Develop volunteer opportunities and recruitment approaches.
- Work with managers to understand volunteer needs and create meaningful opportunities for volunteer involvement.
- Promote volunteering opportunities and support recruitment campaigns.
- Monitor recruitment activity and identify opportunities for improvement.
- Coordinate recruitment planning and support the development of consistent recruitment approaches.
- Ensure recruitment processes are welcoming, accessible and aligned with organisational requirements.

Volunteer Onboarding and Development

- Lead volunteer onboarding approaches.
- Review onboarding experiences and identify improvements.
- Support volunteer development opportunities.
- Ensure onboarding and induction processes help volunteers feel welcomed, informed, confident and connected from the outset.
- Work with the People Team Admin Officer to ensure administrative arrangements support an effective volunteer journey.

Volunteer Management Support

- Act as the primary point of contact for volunteer manager guidance, support and good practice.
- Provide guidance, coaching and support to managers who work with volunteers.
- Support managers to address volunteer issues and concerns.
- Promote consistent, positive and inclusive volunteer management practice
- Develop resources and guidance to support volunteer involvement.
- Provide advice on complex volunteer management situations and escalate issues where appropriate.
- Build confidence and capability among managers to support volunteers effectively and create positive volunteer experiences.
- Identify areas where additional guidance, support or development may be required.

Volunteer Wellbeing and Retention

- Monitor volunteer experience, wellbeing and retention trends.
- Listen to volunteer feedback and review volunteer experience and exit information.
- Support initiatives that strengthen volunteer experience, satisfaction and retention.
- Identify barriers to volunteer involvement and participation.
- Work with managers, the Engagement & Participation Lead and volunteers to support, develop and improve the volunteer experience.
- Use volunteer insight to identify patterns, concerns and opportunities for improvement.
- Contribute to approaches that support volunteer wellbeing and retention, recognising that responsibility for volunteer experience and retention is shared across the organisation.

Volunteer Systems, Processes and Insight

- Lead the development and continuous improvement of volunteering systems and processes.
- Act as the organisational lead for volunteer management systems and associated processes.
- Work with colleagues and volunteers to ensure volunteering systems support a positive, accessible and well-supported volunteer experience.
- Gather and use volunteer feedback and insight to inform the continuous improvement of volunteering.
- Identify opportunities to improve efficiency, accessibility and user experience.
- Ensure volunteer records, reporting requirements and operational processes remain fit for purpose.
- Monitor trends, performance and volunteer data to identify risks, opportunities and areas for improvement.
- Use operational insight to inform service development and organisational decision-making.
- Maintain oversight of systems, including Assemble, and ensure they continue to meet organisational needs.
- Work closely with the People Team Admin Officer to ensure effective administration and accurate records.
- Maintain oversight of recruitment, vetting and compliance processes, ensuring appropriate checks, monitoring and escalation arrangements are in place.

Volunteer Learning and Development

- Lead the development of volunteer learning and development approaches.
- Develop volunteer learning pathways and resources that support volunteers to grow in confidence, capability and impact.
- Support volunteer manager training and development.
- Maintain and develop relevant volunteer learning content, including Moodle resources.
- Identify learning needs and opportunities to strengthen volunteer capability.
- Work with the Engagement & Participation Lead and relevant colleagues to ensure learning opportunities support a positive volunteer experience.

Volunteer Network Development

- Support the ongoing development, sustainability and growth of the volunteer network.
- Identify opportunities and provide recommendations to support the development of future volunteer models and approaches.
- Champion the value and impact of volunteering across the organisation and contribute operational insight to the future development of volunteering.
- Work with managers to understand current and future volunteer needs and appropriate opportunities.
- Identify opportunities to broaden and strengthen the network by attracting volunteers with a diverse range of skills, experiences and backgrounds
- Monitor the health and development of the volunteer network, identifying gaps, challenges and opportunities

General

- Represent volunteering within organisational projects and discussions.
- Undertake other duties consistent with the role.
- Present progress reports to senior leadership and trustees.
- Carry out duties in accordance with Shannon Trust values, policies, and procedures.

Person Specification

Experience

Essential requirements	Desirable requirements
• Proven experience of coordinating or managing volunteering programmes, including volunteer recruitment, onboarding, support and retention, preferably across multiple locations, services or regions. • Demonstrated success in building effective relationships and providing guidance and support to colleagues and managers responsible for volunteer involvement. • Experience of reviewing and improving processes, systems and ways of working to enhance volunteer involvement and operational effectiveness. • Experience of working with volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and creating inclusive volunteering opportunities. • Experience of involving volunteers in the development, review or improvement of services, resources, processes or volunteer experiences. • Track record of designing, developing and delivering training, guidance, resources and learning activities. • Experience of monitoring volunteer activity, performance and outcomes, using data and insight to identify improvements and inform decision-making.	• Experience within the criminal justice, education, rehabilitation or wider social impact sectors. • Experience of using volunteer management systems, such as Assemble, and learning platforms, such as Moodle. • Experience of data analysis. • Experience of developing volunteer resources, guidance and operational documentation.

Skills and abilities

Essential requirements
• Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, with the ability to build positive relationships, influence others and adapt communication styles to different audiences. • Strong organisational skills, with the ability to manage multiple priorities, maintain attention to detail and work effectively across competing demands. • Ability to coach, support and develop colleagues and volunteers, helping others build confidence, capability and good practice. • Effective problem-solving skills, with the confidence to address challenges and recommend practical solutions. • Ability and experience of actively involving volunteers in shaping and improving volunteering practice, resources and operational processes. • Ability to analyse and interpret information, identify trends and make evidence-based recommendations to improve volunteering outcomes. • Ability to develop, implement and improve processes and systems that support effective volunteer management. • Ability to build constructive working relationships and work collaboratively across teams to provide practical support and achieve shared goals.

Knowledge and understanding

Essential requirements	Desirable requirements
• Strong understanding of volunteer management good practice, including volunteer recruitment, onboarding, training, support, retention and recognition. • Knowledge of approaches that support positive volunteer experiences and long-term volunteer engagement. • Understanding of safeguarding, risk management, compliance requirements and their application within volunteering programmes. • Understanding of equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility within volunteering, and how these contribute to inclusive volunteer experiences and opportunities. • Understanding of volunteer learning and development approaches and how these contribute to volunteer confidence, capability and retention.	• Knowledge and understanding of the criminal justice sector. • Awareness of current volunteering trends, developments and emerging good practice. • Understanding of how volunteer data, reporting and insight can be used to evaluate impact and inform service development.

Essential requirements	Desirable requirements
• Knowledge of volunteer management systems, data management principles and operational processes that support effective programme delivery.	

Working at Shannon Trust

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.

We are a Disability Confident employer and commit to inviting any disabled applicant who meets the minimum role criteria to interview.

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.

Equity, diversity, inclusion & belonging

We want everyone to feel welcome, respected, and able to do their best work. We’re an equitable and inclusive organisation and actively encourage applications from underrepresented or marginalised communities.

We’re committed to making the recruitment process as accessible as possible so if you need any reasonable adjustments at any stage, just let us know and we’re happy to support you. Also to help you prepare and feel confident, we share the key interview questions in advance with all candidates.

Use of AI

Shannon Trust commits to not using Artificial Intelligence (AI) at any stage in the recruitment process; all applications are fully assessed by a member of our team.

We know applying for jobs can take time and can feel tricky to get right. At Shannon Trust, we want to hear your voice, your experience and your motivation, not something generated by AI tools like ChatGPT or CoPilot.

Applications written in your own words help us understand what makes you the right fit for the role and allow us to assess everyone fairly. To keep the process fair for all candidates, applications that appear to be generated by AI may not be considered.

Right to work in the UK and visa sponsorship

To work at Shannon Trust, you must already live in, and have the right to work in, the UK (for example, UK citizenship, settled or pre-settled status or a visa that allows you to work). Unfortunately, we're not able to provide visa sponsorship for any roles at this time.

If you have any questions about the above or the recruitment process, we're here to help, please get in touch at hr@shannontrust.org.uk

How to apply

- find out more and apply

Closing date: Tuesday 8th December

Interviews to be held w/c 14th December

*Please note that this role is advertised subject to consultation.