

Doorstep Library

Words take you places

Information supporting Trustees role description

Why Doorstep Library is important

Comprehensive studies have shown that the UK is one of the most unforgiving countries in the developed world when it comes to the literacy of economically disadvantaged families.

Here, how well you read has a direct bearing on how well you do in life. For various reasons, children coming from under-resourced areas are less likely to have books, less likely to read with their parents and less likely to read for pleasure. Not only are they more likely to fall behind in their studies as a result, but they also fall behind in their lives. Amongst developed nations, it is the UK that shows the clearest link between poor literacy and unemployment. For most youngsters there is no way back, because much of what support there is doesn't reach its target. We leave our most vulnerable children behind.

Additionally, the pandemic deprived the most disadvantaged children, like those living in the communities we work with, of many months of education. They need sustained educational support now more than ever and we want to expand our reach to work with as many of these children as possible.

What we do

"Words take you places" is the central belief behind everything we do at Doorstep Library. We are dedicated to bringing the gift of books and the joy of reading into the homes of families across London who need our support, reading with them and their children to inspire a love of books, of stories and storytelling, and to instill a lifelong passion for reading.

Equipped with a reading stool and a supply of books, our volunteers are right on the doorstep, ready to use books to fuel children's natural love of stories, fire their imaginations, and encourage their appreciation of reading. Our goal is using the power of a love of reading to help each child develop the self-confidence and essential skills they need to access all the opportunities that will come their way in life. Whether in person, or online, we are there to support children and families who need us most.

The organisation has gone from strength to strength. Now in our 15th year we have expanded into our 4th London borough and offer an Online Reading Corner – using technology to bring our unique service to even more children and families.

Our History

Doorstep Library started out in 2009 as a small group of volunteers with a vision - that enabling the most disadvantaged children to learn to love reading for pleasure would give them skills for life. Our first project was in Fulham and we have now grown to 20 projects across four London boroughs.

We have been fighting inequality in education since 2010, and brought the magic and benefits of reading to more than 2,000 children. Today we are a registered charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) with 10 full-time and 7 part-time employees and more than 100 volunteers

Our Future

Doorstep Library has ambitious plans to scale up our work. In order to do this we need to raise more funds by diversifying our funding base, recruiting and training more volunteers. In the past six months we have increased our staff team to support the increase in beneficiary and volunteer numbers, we are working on improving the structures and procedures we have in place to ensure we can function effectively as a much larger charity.

Our work goes beyond the page. We empower families to become involved in their child's reading, helping them to develop their confidence in their own skills, whilst building trust. We use the magic of books and reading to bring people together, share stories and connect with their communities. All of these many transformational opportunities may be lost without the proactive intervention of Doorstep Library.

Trustees

Trustees are responsible for the effective governance of the charity. We work closely with the CEO and the senior management team to ensure that Doorstep Library is delivering its mission in a cost effective and efficient manner. As we grow our board of trustees will help us build our reputation as a charity uniquely placed to be part of the drive for improved literacy and life chances in some of the most deprived areas in London. At present, we are looking for trustees with skills/experience/background in any of the following areas

- Lived experience of the issues the families we work with are facing in the UK today
- Impact and evaluation
- Community & referral pathways
- Social Enterprise/Franchising
- Volunteering - recruitment & retention
- Marketing & media
- Education/literacy
- Publishing

Trustee role

Remuneration:	The role of Trustee is not accompanied by any financial remuneration, but reasonable expenses will be reimbursed.
Location:	London SW1W ODH
Time commitment:	4 Board meetings per year plus additional ad hoc meetings with staff/colleagues as necessary. Trustees may also represent the Charity at various events and meetings with key stakeholders
Reporting to:	Board of Trustees

Job Description

Principal Responsibilities Governance

- Ensure that Doorstep Library complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations
- Ensure that the governance arrangements are working in the most effective way for the Charity
- Annually assess the changing environment and approve the organisation's business plans, fundraising strategy and budget
- Approve policies
- Work within any agreed policies adopted by the charity
- Ensure that the Board of Trustees is regularly refreshed and incorporates the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to govern and lead the charity effectively, and which also reflects the wider population

Efficiency and effectiveness

- Ensure that decisions are taken in the best, long-term interests of the Charity and that the Board takes collective ownership
- Contribute actively to the board of trustees by giving firm strategic direction, defining goals, setting targets, and evaluating performance against agreed targets
- Approve major actions of the organisation, such as capital expenditure on all items over authorised limits and major changes in activities and services.
- Review the results achieved by the staff team in relation to the organisation's aims and objectives, annual and long range goals and the performance of similar projects
- Be certain that the financial structure of the organisation is adequate for its current needs and its long range strategy
- Provide candid and constructive criticism, advice, comments and praise
- Foster, maintain and ensure that constructive relationships exist with and between the Trustees

External Relations

- Act as an ambassador for the cause and the charity

- Act as a spokesperson for the organisation when appropriate
- Represent the charity at external functions, meetings and events

Person Specification

We are seeking to recruit to our Board of Trustees individuals with any of the following backgrounds/skills/experience:

- Lived experience of the issues the families we work with are facing in the UK today
- Impact and evaluation
- Community & referral pathways
- Social Enterprise/Franchising
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Personal Qualities

- Demonstrate a strong and visible passion and commitment to the charity, its strategic objectives and cause
- Exhibit strong inter-personal and relationship building abilities and be comfortable in an ambassadorial role
- Demonstrate tact and diplomacy, with the ability to listen and engage effectively
- Strong networking capabilities that can be utilised for the benefit of the charity
- Ability to foster and promote a collaborative team environment
- Ability to commit time to conduct the role well, including travel and attending events out of office hours

Terms

Board members will be invited to serve a three-year term to be eligible for re-appointment for one additional term.

We are keen for our Board to reflect the communities we serve, and very much welcome applications from those with relevant lived experience, and candidates from under-represented communities and groups

For information regarding the charity and the role, visit our website, www.doorsteplibrary.org.uk.

EDI STATEMENT

We never judge a book by its cover because we know it's what's inside that counts. Every one of us is our own unique story to tell and, at Doorstep Library, storytelling is what we do best. We listen and we learn. We trust and we tell. We challenge, we accept and together, we grow.

We are brave. We are kind. We are us.

We are all of us.

HELP & SUPPORT

If you are interested in this role and need assistance with your application, or have any concerns about the application process, we are here to help!

Please email sandy@doorsteplibrary.org.uk in the first instance.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Please email your CV and a covering letter explaining why you wish to join Doorstep Library and how your skills and experience align with the role and responsibilities described.

Email to

sandy@doorsteplibrary.org.uk

Please put TRUSTEE APPLICATION in the subject box

Closing date for applications is September 30th. We are actively interviewing.