

Head of Networks, Partnerships and Communities



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Welcome letter from the CEO and the Director of Programmes & Partnerships

BookTrust is the UK's largest children's reading charity. We know that children who read are happier, healthier, more empathetic and more creative. They do better at school, and reading addresses systemic inequalities that gives them better life-chances. Working with every local authority and across every region in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, and supported by Arts Council funding, we reach over three million families a year through partners in schools, children's centres, health visitors and libraries. This incredible network helps us to get children excited about reading from an early age.

This is a brilliant time to join BookTrust. We have just launched our new strategy, with a stronger focus on supporting children and families in need, and we are gearing up across the organisation for implementation. The effects of the pandemic on children's mental health and well-being, and the consequences for the life chances of children living in disadvantage mean there has never been a stronger rationale and urgency for what we do. We are exploring exciting new ways to support children and families to develop a reading habit and constructing a powerful case for our cause and for the way that we work.

BookTrust has a powerful partnerships network but we need a step change in our partnerships work to deliver our new strategy. We need a more diverse range of partners to ensure we are reaching families who need our support most. We need strong reciprocal and strategic relationships to deliver reach and impact in a targeted and scalable way. We need to design our offer and interventions for maximum flexibility so they can be utilised by partners across our network, and respond to place-based developments in particular geographical and community contexts.

This will be the exciting challenge for our Head of Networks, Partnerships and Communities, a new role for BookTrust, bringing together for the first time our Northern Ireland, Wales and England partnerships functions alongside design and innovation and research and impact functions in one directorate. We have a secure funding base, investment from our reserves and keen support from our trustees to drive and develop this work. So with these firm foundations in place you can focus on refocusing existing partnerships, developing new partnerships, and helping BookTrust implement the changes it needs to become a truly external-facing and responsive organisation.

You are someone who understands the strategic interplay of national, regional and local partnerships and how to influence and accommodate partners' priorities at all levels. You have the gravitas and strategic grip to engage in the most senior partnership forums; you also have listening skills and attention to detail that will help you unpick operational challenges inside the organisation. You enjoy problem-solving and can come up with new ideas and drive them towards implementation. You'll work collaboratively with others, both internally and with our current and future partners and you'll have the credibility and influence to engage and galvanize your colleagues and team in new ways of working.

If you are excited by this challenge then we should love to hear from you.



Diana Gerald
CEO



Annie Crombie
Director of Programmes and Partnerships

About the Role

This is a new role which offers huge scope and potential. It is a leadership and delivery position within the Programmes and Partnerships Directorate with line management responsibility for three teams covering England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The role is responsible for the charity's national delivery partnerships, working directly with partners on the ground to get millions of books out to families every year. It is also responsible for developing and sustaining the partnerships needed to get our offer to the families that need it most – enabling us to reach more of the right families and maximise the impact of every interaction.








This is not a fundraising role, nor limited to stakeholder engagement – partnerships at BookTrust are the prime way we deliver our programmes, interventions, and wider offer to families across the UK. This role is therefore key to ensuring that delivery is effective and consistently high quality, getting to the right families in the right places and providing the insight needed to improve and iterate our approach. Delivery partnerships at BookTrust are currently focused on 152 English local authorities and the Northern Irish and Welsh governments – and onwards via a range of institutions and professionals including schools and health visitors. We expect in the future that this partner base will expand to include other public and voluntary sector partnerships – for example in health and housing, and other third sector organisations.

The Head of Networks, Partnerships and Communities is also responsible for future opportunities and working to improve our delivery approach. This includes providing insight from front line delivery to inform implementation of our strategy – working closely with senior partnership managers, the Head of Design and Innovation and the Head of Research and Impact. This role is responsible for identifying or creating appropriate routes to our partners and delivery settings – in collaboration with our Head of Supply Chain – and for explaining and representing the perspective of our delivery partners to the rest of BookTrust.



Role Profile



Terms and conditions

-  Permanent contract
-  Salary: c. £70k p.a.
-  Holidays: 28 days plus public holidays
-  Pension scheme – 7% employer contribution
-  3 x salary life assurance
-  Employee Assistance Programme
-  Flexible working arrangements

This is a full-time role reporting to the Director of Programmes and Partnerships, and is a national role with the flexibility to work across our offices in Battersea, London, Cardiff and Belfast. Although BookTrust is currently home working, we expect to move to an agile working model in the future. This is likely to mean c.2 days of your week being spent in London with the remainder of your time spent working from home, from our regional offices and meeting with partners across England, possibly including overnight stays from time to time. The postholder will be expected to carry out all duties in line with BookTrust policies and procedures and be prepared to undertake additional reasonable duties, as required.

Key responsibilities

Management and leadership

-  Day-to-day management of three teams managing our local partnership networks;
-  Leading change across those teams as needed to deliver the strategy;
-  Leading teams to identify and develop relationships with target partners and secure the buy-in needed to deploy the BookTrust offer into new settings as per the new strategy, supporting prioritisation and problem-solving;
-  Building a team culture that is open to questions and challenge, confident and able to provide leadership within BookTrust, increasing our organisational awareness of our partners and their priorities, and full of energy for seizing our opportunity to make a difference to children in greatest need;
-  Developing a strong networks and partnerships function for BookTrust, a new coherent team, bringing together skills, knowledge and good practice from England, Wales and Northern Ireland teams and senior managers.
-  Defining and developing partnerships strategy
-  Continuing the development and implementation of a bold and ambitious non-commercial partnerships strategy that will enable BookTrust to accelerate progress in delivering our new strategic plan.
-  Providing leadership for BookTrust on the key approaches required to deliver the new BookTrust strategy through partnerships.



Maximising the potential of our partners as a link between BookTrust and our beneficiaries, and considering how we need to flex and adapt our networks and pathways based on new and growing understanding of the best moments and opportunities to engage beneficiaries.



Working with regional relationship teams and other BookTrust teams to set and implement a clear plan for how our partnerships work will support delivery of the strategy.

Ensuring delivery of BookTrust interventions via partners



Maintaining partnerships needed to deploy millions of books each year across three nations.



Leading regional relationship teams to grow scope, scale and value of partnerships in line with the partnerships strategy, including where needed, securing commitment from partners to make an additional investment (time or budget) to support testing and roll-out of new or updated elements of the BookTrust offer.



Using information and data to inform and guide prioritisation and decision-making around where we deploy our partnership resources to best effect.



Maintaining key relationships for BookTrust (directly, or indirectly through other members of staff) and improving our profile and reputation with current partners.



Working with other teams (including marketing and operations) to develop resources, capacity and delivery routes to support partners in delivery of the existing and future BookTrust offer with maximum impact.

Working collaboratively across BookTrust



Working with the senior leadership team and senior partnership managers to advise, support, challenge and deliver our partnerships strategy.



Working with Design and Innovation and Research and Impact teams on the development and testing of new products, propositions and interventions – so that all our work is informed by the perspective of partners and local communities and developed in a manner that maximises the impact of our delivery channels (for example, developing appropriate support and resources for partners and professionals as part of our work).



Working with our Research and Impact team to provide insight and sector knowledge that supports decision-making at BookTrust.



Convening and leading external and internal project teams to progress our partnerships strategy.



Leading change to integrate the work of the three regional teams and their perspectives into the wider organisation, and identifying and supporting new ways of working elsewhere in the organisation where that is needed to support new approaches to local delivery.



Leading on the identification and development of national partnerships to deliver or support delivery of the new BookTrust offer at scale.

Person Specification

About you

You are able to make things happen, are a strong manager and influencer (both internally and externally), a natural collaborator, and driven to make a difference to children who face challenges in life. You have significant experience in leading and managing change. You are resilient, self-aware and have a proactive, solutions-focused approach to problem-solving and getting things done. You are comfortable with the challenge of managing multiple, geographically dispersed teams to deliver programmes at scale. You will be confident in using and presenting information to support decision-making and prioritisation. You will have the gravitas, credibility and influence to engage and galvanize your colleagues and teams in new ways of working and drive decision-making at a senior level and action at delivery level. You have deep knowledge of our delivery partners, professionals – and the realities facing the families who are our target audience.

Skills needed



An in-depth knowledge and understanding of the changing public and third sector context



Experience of driving action and change in a large complex political environment



Experience of successful negotiation and implementation of complex commissioning programmes with multiple stakeholder engagement.



Ability to successfully manage multiple, dispersed teams encompassing both senior and junior, and strategic and operational roles.



Experience of establishing and building effective partnership arrangements.



Strong interpersonal skills and collaborative working experience with the ability to negotiate, influence and generate confidence, trust and respect.



Resilience and flexibility of approach; embracing of change; personally accountable and ambitious to deliver and manage uncertainty and ambiguity for themselves and others.



Ability to simplify and explain complex issues to a range of audiences.



Resilient, tenacious and outcomes-focussed.

Application Process

Indicative timetable

Closing date for applications: Monday 7 June 2021

First round interviews: w/c 21 June 2021

First round interviews will be held remotely.

Contact

If you would like any further information about this role or have any queries regarding the application process, please email booktrust@faerfield.co.uk

Application

TO APPLY FOR THIS ROLE, PLEASE CLICK [HERE](#)

About BookTrust

[BookTrust](#) is the UK's largest children's reading charity. We know that children who read are happier, healthier, more empathetic, and more creative. They also do better at school.

Working with every local authority and across every region in England, Northern Ireland and Wales, and supported by Arts Council funding we reach over 3 million families a year through partners in schools, children's centres, health visitors and libraries. This incredible network helps us to get children excited about reading from an early age.

This is a brilliant time to join BookTrust. We are developing a new strategy and a new approach to engaging with and understanding our beneficiaries. We are ambitious about developing our programmes to reach more children, particularly those who are disadvantaged, and we want to understand the difference our work is making so we can learn and develop what we do.

Further useful information



[BookTrust website](#)



[Our Strategy - The Next Chapter \(Summary\)](#). (The full document is available for download from the [application site](#).)



[Governance and Annual Reports](#)

What humans do well is
to tell stories ... if you can
tell a story you can join
the dots and exercise
some degree of control
over your world ...

Sir Nick Serota

