



Chief
Executive
Officer

Welcome

Dear Candidate

Imagine your world without words...

Shannon Trust is an award-winning national charity whose purpose is to transform prisoners' lives by unlocking the power of reading. Almost fifty per cent of the prison population has a reading age of 10 or lower which effectively cuts them off from family, friends and the opportunity to develop new skills and acquire education and training. So helping them learn to read is transformative.

We have come a long way since Christopher Morgan, shocked by the levels of literacy within prisons, used the royalties from his book *Invisible Crying Tree* - which captures letters between him and Tom Shannon a life sentenced prisoner - to establish Shannon Trust. Our first reading programme went live in 2001 at HMP Wandsworth.

Today we are in every prison in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Our unique approach is delivered by prisoners who can read working with prisoners who cannot, supported by our tireless network of volunteers. In 2018, 1,643 prisoner mentors helped 3,646 of their peers to learn to read using Turning Pages, our proprietary literacy materials and delivery method.

Highly regarded within the Criminal Justice sector, we have ambitions to expand our reach and impact, and to develop new opportunities for commercial income. Additionally, we aim to enhance our existing partnerships with Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and other likeminded organisations whose objectives align with those of Shannon Trust.

As our new CEO, you will help shape the future vision and strategy of the organisation, as we look to embark on a new three-year strategy from 2021. There is scope to review our current structure and staffing to ensure we are organised to support future growth, as well as designing a funding model which seeks to capitalise on both our voluntary and commercial opportunities.

This role isn't for everyone. It can be tough and challenging with its share of frustrations, but what it does bring is that rare opportunity to make a very tangible difference to people's lives.

We're looking for a dynamic leader and manager with vision, entrepreneurial energy and a deep interest in social inclusion who can unleash the potential of an organisation that already punches well above its weight. You will enjoy both high level strategic and advocacy work, building deep and successful relationships with funders and senior stakeholders as well as hands-on tasks and delivery.

This role offers an opportunity to work closely with an experienced and committed Board who are dedicated to our purpose of making sure that there are no bars to reading and that every prisoner can be a reader.

If you share our passion and purpose to make a difference and bring the skills and experience we are looking for, we very much look forward to hearing from you.

Sue O'Hara
Chair of Trustees

About Shannon Trust

Every prisoner a reader

Our vision is to engage with every non-reading prisoner early in their sentence, to open up new avenues of opportunity, and give them hope for a new and different life. Shannon Trust supports and inspires people in prison to unlock the power of reading, changing their lives and those of their peers.

Learning to read isn't just a brilliant thing - it changes lives, builds confidence, makes the world an easier place to live in and the impossible possible. Unlocking the power of reading as an adult has a ripple effect - it's the beginning of a learning journey which when shared with future generations, children, grandchildren, family and friends, stops the cycle of illiteracy in its tracks.

Our work in prisons

Shannon Trust has a working partnership with the HM Prison Service to embed our reading programme in every prison in England, Wales & Northern Ireland.

In 2018 over 3,646 people in prison started to learn to read with the Shannon Trust reading programme. 1,643 prisoner Mentors were trained to deliver the plan.

Turning Pages

Turning Pages is Shannon Trust's reading programme. It has been specifically developed for adults struggling with reading and received a positive external evaluation from Birmingham City University. You can find their report *Turning Pages, Changing Lives* [here](#). The positive impact of our approach and the standard and quality of the assets we have developed have been recognised beyond Shannon Trust and are used by other organisations to support adult readers.

Volunteers

At any one time, we have between 120-140 volunteers who support prison staff and prisoners to deliver the Shannon Trust reading programme.

Funding

The charity is currently funded by Trusts and Foundations and donations from individuals. In 2017, we began selling our reading programme *Turning Pages* outside of prisons. This is part of our income diversification plan to ensure the long-term sustainability of the charity.

Staff and offices

As a national charity, we currently have a staff team of 11. Our head office is in Vauxhall. However, a number of the staff, including the Regional Managers are home-based at locations across the country.

Shannon Trust governance

The Shannon Trust Board, together with the CEO, ensure the charity is governed and led in a way that supports our vision, Every Prisoner a Reader.

Find out more

Further information about Shannon Trust and how our Reading Plan unlocks the power of reading is available from our website. You can also find us on:

[Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Instagram](#)

Our Strategy

Our key focus areas between 2020 and 2021 are:

- Equitable access to Shannon Trust reading programme in prison
- Further engage our Mentors and Learners
- Increase the number of people learning to read
- Explore opportunities to unlock the power of reading outside of prisons.

At Shannon Trust we have big ambitions for our impact and reach, in terms of:

- Increasing the numbers of learners and their mentors
- Maintaining the numbers of prisons in which we work
- Our influence with senior civil servants, Ministers and those who frame and deliver policy related to education and rehabilitation within HMPPS
- Improving levels of awareness, influence and support for our work and impact amongst key policy makers and government stakeholders
- Developing and improving the way in which readers can be supported on release, so they do not stop learning simply because they have left prison. when they move back into the community
- Monetising our proprietary reading materials to provide greater funding stability

To achieve all of this we will need to be open to change and challenge. The individual who steps into this role at this point in our story has a real opportunity to shape the next phase of our development. In 2021 we will be 20 years old, we are eager to maintain our momentum and energy so that our next 20 years are as radically life-changing for those with whom we work, as our first.

We are committed to building upon the successes of the last few years. Trustees wish to appoint a courageous, energetic and experienced leader with the ability to challenge and extend the impact and reach of our work by:

- continuing to raise awareness and understanding of the Trust and our work amongst strategic stakeholders to win their support
- providing direction and leadership in the formulation and achievement of the Trust's strategic plans, policies, development and objectives
- Ensuring effective, efficient and robust management and administration of the charity and its work
- continuing to secure the financial future of the charity by both reinforcing and extending our reach and relationships with donors
- evaluating the opportunity to develop sustainable income streams from the Trust's assets and intellectual capital; and by,
- considering how our mission to unlock the power of reading can be further achieved by extending our relationships and connections "beyond the prison gate"

We have a unique strategic partnership with Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), a supportive core of donors who appreciate and understand our work, as well as a team of ambassadors who champion us. The organisation is run by a tight team who have developed real expertise in both adult peer learning and managing the range of relationships required to ensure our work remains at the forefront of the rehabilitation effort in prisons.

Our radical ambition to unlock the power of reading for all remains as strong as ever; and the need for our service and support has, if anything, grown. We are looking to appoint a CEO who shares our passion for what we do and who is inspired and committed to helping us chart the course for our next decade.

Job Description

Job title	Chief Executive Officer
Responsible to	Chair and Board of Trustees
Place of work	London
Hours of work	35 hours of work
Salary	£70,000 per annum

Specific responsibilities:

Strategy, Leadership and Governance

- Drive the development of our strategy to take us to the next stage.
- Implement the business plan to achieve our aims and objectives, as agreed with the Board of Trustees.
- Provide clear, prompt and full accountability for the operation of the charity to the Board of Trustees.
- Act as Company Secretary and prepare the Trust's Annual Report and oversee the preparation of accounts.
- Ensure compliance with the constitutional obligations as defined in governing documents, charity law, company law, SORPS, and other legal requirements.
- Ensure charity policies are reviewed by the Board as scheduled and recommendations for change are compliant with statutory requirements and reflect best practice.

External Relationships, Marketing and Fundraising

- Diversify the range of fundraising activities to deliver the best possible return and develop new income streams with emphasis on long term sustainability.
- Develop and implement a communications strategy for internal and external stakeholders that promotes the work of the trust and ensures we can anticipate, influence and respond in a timely and effective manner to matters of public interest.
- Strengthen and extend effective working relationships with the HM Prison & Probation Service, prisons, the Ministry of Justice, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, Ofsted, Criminal Justice sector charities, and other relevant bodies to win support for the work we do and to have an influential voice in matters which affect what we do.
- Extend and maintain effective networks and foster good communications with all principal supporters, donors, and other stakeholders.
- Act as lead spokesperson to the media on all aspects of policy, operations and other matters.
- Develop and maintain good information systems which ensure the Trust has an appropriate web presence, can store and process data while maintaining its integrity and provide an effective platform for communications with staff, volunteers and stakeholders.
- Monitor and evaluate the political landscape to ensure that the Trust is aware of political and other changes that may affect our reputation or service delivery and recommend to the Board actions to address such circumstances.



Job Description

Financial Management

- Ensure the Board of Trustees is informed in a timely manner of significant changes to agreed budgets. Keep the Board informed of potentially adverse financial issues.
- Ensure that the implementation of the Business Plan delivers best value for money.
- Work with the Treasurer and Accountant to ensure financial procedures are reviewed, updated and implemented.
- Ensure appropriate accounting records are maintained.

Staff Management and Leadership

- Develop and sustain a high performing senior team and inspire the entire staff and volunteer cadre.
- Develop annual performance objectives linked to the business plan, which are monitored regularly.
- Foster good communication within the organisation, ensuring staff and volunteers are aware of the Trust's vision, objectives and plans.
- Develop and implement policies and procedures for effective recruitment, training, support and performance management.
- Oversee volunteer recruitment and development to maximise the potential of volunteers and help create a culture where people are motivated and developed to give of their best.
- Ensure that the organisation has the necessary resources (human, material and financial) to meet the charity's strategic objectives.
- Promote best practice in delivering equality and diversity amongst staff and volunteers.
- Develop and implement reporting systems that allow the Trust to monitor and evaluate performance and effectiveness.



Person Specification

Knowledge and Experience

Essential

- A strong and successful track record at senior management level with experience of working with a board of trustees/non-executive board.
- Direct leadership of/involvement in developing strategy and leading successful change.
- Experience or knowledge of growing and diversifying income.
- Sound financial management experience with a firm understanding of risk and working with colleagues to manage and mitigate it.
- Experience of inspiring and maintaining a positive, values-led, high performing working culture.

Desirable

- Knowledge of the Criminal Justice sector.
- A strong track-record as a Chief Executive.
- Understanding of the nature of challenges faced by adults with poor literacy skills.
- Understanding of the dynamics of delivery in a politically sensitive and public sector environment.

Skills and Abilities

- Ability to think strategically and to communicate the strategic vision.
- Ability to operate and communicate successfully with the Chair, Trustee Board, employees and volunteers.
- Proven skills in managing the successful delivery of programmes and services.
- Experience of developing relationships and networking with stakeholders.
- Excellent written and oral communication, with a high level of presentational skills, proven interpersonal skills and the ability to inspire and successfully influence a wide range of diverse audiences.

Leadership Style and Personal Attributes

- Have a proven track record of inspirational and authoritative leadership and highly developed management skills to motivate staff.
- Professional, comfortable and persuasive in high profile situations, with strong influencing skills.
- A confident, authoritative, engaging and consultative management style.
- Commitment to the Trust's literacy work with prisoners and our ethos that prisoners should be empowered to change their own lives. Ultimately you should share our passion for, and belief in, the principle of rehabilitation.



Terms of Appointment

Salary	Up to £70,000 per annum (dependant on experience)
Location	London
Pension	Auto enrolment and 3% employer contribution
Annual leave	28 days plus Bank Holidays



How to Apply

We hope you will consider making an application. If you have questions about the appointment and would find it helpful to have an informal conversation, please contact Katy.Giddens@starfishsearch.com or Mark.Crowley@starfishsearch.com and we will be happy to arrange a call.

To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/shannon-trust-chief-executive/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- your CV (no more than three sides)
- a supporting statement that sets out why you think this role is the right move for you and how you meet the Knowledge and Experience criteria.
- we would be grateful if you would also tell us your current salary details (we do not disclose this to our clients without your consent).

Closing date	Friday 3rd April 2020
First round interviews	w/c 13th & 20th April 2020
Agreement of the final shortlist	w/c 27th April 2020
References taken up for shortlisted candidates	To follow shortlist
Interviews with Shannon Trust	w/c 11th May 2020



