



National
Literacy
Trust



Recruitment of
Trustees



Starfish

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in joining the Board of Trustees of the National Literacy Trust.

For almost 30 years, the charity has been working to improve the reading, writing, speaking and listening skills of those who need it most, giving them the best possible chance of success in school, work and life. The impact of the pandemic means our work is more vital than ever.

Improving literacy levels is a national priority for the UK, linked to economic success, social justice and equality. However, early evidence suggests that school closures and national lockdowns have disproportionately impacted the skills of the most disadvantaged children. This is likely to reverse progress to close the attainment gap between pupils from lower and higher income backgrounds over the past decade.

Extraordinary challenges require extraordinary approaches. Our work is targeted at communities with the highest levels of disadvantage and the lowest levels of literacy. We work with them to create local solutions. We support thousands of schools and early years settings with innovative programmes and resources. We provide support directly to children and families. In all this work, we are fortunate to have an incredible range of partners, including local organisations and frontline services, well-known brands such as McDonald's, WHSmith and The Premier League, large multinationals such as Lancôme, KPMG and Amazon, as well as all the major publishers. Our success is dependent on their support.

We are seeking two new Trustees to join us at this pivotal moment and further broaden the breadth and agility of our Board, as well as ensuring we have the skills and leadership to take the charity to the next stage of its development.

As well as the skills and qualities we expect of all Board members, we are specifically looking for candidates who can bring either:

- education sector leadership and credibility, to ensure our approach remains rigorous and rooted in evidence, and responds to need; or
- experience of community regeneration, to ensure our strategy enables us to build local capacity, target our work and respond to both local and national agendas

You will be part of a strong and committed Board, responsible for ensuring we remain in robust financial health and continue to grow our national reach, profile and presence.

We actively encourage applications from people with diverse experience and backgrounds, including understanding and experience of the communities we work with.

As a charity, we recognise that we are on a journey to be more representative of the families we serve at all levels, including within our Board. If you bring the skills and experience we are looking for to help us to achieve even more for families, then we very much look forward to hearing from you.

Joanna Prior, Chair of Trustees

About the National Literacy Trust

The National Literacy Trust exists to give children and young people from disadvantaged communities the literacy skills to success in life. Our mission is one of social justice – good literacy skills are the bedrock of economic, cultural and social community development.

The challenge is vast, particularly in the wake of the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on those most in need. The disruption to education, and the social and emotional impact of the pandemic, have dented the literacy of a generation.

We are committed to addressing this challenge with the same agility and focus that shaped our work during the pandemic. We responded immediately to national lockdown in two ways: for the majority of families the best way to access our literacy support was through our digital platforms, so we provided new and creative resources to support literacy, language and learning in their homes. We had over 1,000,000 unique users to our family-focused website Words for Life in 2020-21. However there was also an immediate need to support digitally excluded families with physical resources and books. We supported the literacy of 700,000 children who were out of school and couldn't access digital learning, and provided over half a million books, magazines and writing resources to children in disadvantaged communities

We know that the children from the communities that have suffered most in the past two years deserve exceptional and timely support to change their life stories. We will continue to work with schools, communities, families and our huge range of partners to deliver it.

Our mission

We give children and young people from disadvantaged communities the literacy skills to succeed in life.

Our values

Our values shape the behaviours, culture and programmes of the National Literacy Trust and strengthen our ability to impact on our target audiences:

- **We are focused** on children and families from disadvantaged communities where literacy levels are low. Our work is driven by insight into their needs and a deep commitment to serve them. We are focused on the schools where they learn and communities where they live.
- **We are enterprising**, eager to innovate and create new solutions.
- **We are connecting**, linking to the families and communities we serve and to the social, public and business sectors that we wish to bring together to raise literacy levels in the UK.

Our approaches

We have three ways of addressing our mission.

1. We work with schools to raise literacy levels.
2. We maximise our impact by focusing on the most disadvantaged areas.
3. We campaign to change behaviours and make literacy a priority.

The work we are doing in 'place'

Over the past decade, we have been developing place-based solutions to raise literacy levels through system and behaviour change. Our National Literacy Trust Hubs make a long-term commitment to working in an area, bringing together our expertise with local knowledge and partnerships to create better life chances for young people. Our first Hub was launched in Middlesbrough in 2013 and now we have 14 across the UK. Each Hub is based on the principles of collective impact but tailored to local need. Our approach is developed in partnership with local organisations, communities and individuals and combines interlinking projects, interventions, volunteering programmes, media campaigning and behaviour change initiatives which work to meet the unique needs of each place. We have also developed regional campaigns across larger areas – for example, in the North East – and other local projects in both urban and rural areas.

Our Hub areas:

Middlesbrough, Bradford, Peterborough, Birmingham, Black Country, Hastings, North Yorkshire Coast, Swindon, Nottingham, Doncaster, Manchester, Stoke-on-Trent, Redcar, Blackpool

Case study – Early years support in Middlesbrough

When we first set up our Middlesbrough Hub, we worked with children's centres based around 11 priority primary schools in the town, in some of the most deprived wards in the country. Around 200 families took part in Early Words Together, a six-week programme where trained volunteers from the community work one-to-one with parents and young children in an early years setting to promote good early literacy practices. We then tracked those pupils at they started school. At the end of their Reception year, those who had been part of the programmes showed a marked improvement compared with other children in Middlesbrough and the national average. Over the course of two years the number of children reaching the expected level in communication and language increased by 20.1 percentage points (against an increase of 12.4 percentage points for children in settings that did not take part and a national average increase of 5 percentage points).

The increase in children reaching the expected levels in literacy was even greater: 20.9 percentage point increase compared with 9.1 for children in settings that did not take part and a national average increase of 5.

Case study - Using poetry to raise attainment in Bradford

Our Stories is a creative writing and performance poetry programme developed by our Bradford Hub to engage pupils with low literacy, especially boys. A teacher's resource pack was developed for use with 10 to 13-year-olds, offering a wide range of poetry activities for the classroom. Local poets and spoken word artists donated their poetry to be included in the pack. The programme was enhanced through a partnership with Bradford Museums and Galleries, the Music and Arts Service and the Bradford Literature Festival, who offered opportunities for pupils to engage with creative writing and performance poetry. Over the course of the programme, the percentage of Year 6 pupils at the expected level in writing increased from 46% to 92% with 36% of pupils now above the expected level.

Case study – Cultural partnerships in Peterborough

In Peterborough, we have worked with the City's library and cultural trust, Vivacity, to expand its learning and community engagement programmes. As part of the annual Peterborough Heritage Festival, we worked with primary schools to deliver history-themed literacy activities and used targeting data to focus resources and programmes on areas with the most need. A free "walk and talk" trail sparked family conversations about local landmarks and cultural buildings and ended at the central library to encourage library membership. We have also supported the Museum Education Service to redevelop its schools learning offer, strengthening the links to the English curriculum and aligning it to the needs of literacy coordinators and teachers.

Key stats

The National Literacy Trust is the leading literacy charity in the UK, focused on improving the lives and life chances of children and young people in disadvantaged communities. We have an excellent reputation for delivering inspiring and evidence-based programmes and campaigns, and our research and policy work is leading the way and growing in influence. We have doubled in size in the past three years, with income approaching £10m and 125 staff spread across the UK. We are authoritative and respected in both the education sector and beyond – for example, we now work with over 80 corporate partners. We are supported by our Patron, the Duchess of Cornwall, and a huge range of authors and other advocates for our work.

Our strong regional presence allows us to work at the heart of the communities where we can have the biggest impact, co-creating programmes that recognise and build on local strengths and assets as well as bringing our unique expertise in place-based approaches. Our commitment to diversity and inclusion underpins our strategy. Our strong organisational culture, and flexible and agile approach to distributed working, ensure we are united in our cause, wherever we are based.

- We supported the literacy of 700,000 children who were out of school and couldn't access digital learning.
- We distributed 575,643 books, magazines and writing resources during lockdown to support children in disadvantaged communities.
- We had over 1,000,000 unique users to our family-focused website Words for Life.
- We worked with 6,492 schools, supporting their efforts to re-engage and inspire learners.
- We launched two new online platforms to support the literacy of children and young people out of school: Family Zone for up to age 11 and Zone in for age 13+.
- We launched our online Education Recovery area with evidence-based training, interventions, programmes and resources to support teachers.
- We launched our Virtual School Library, delivered with Oak National Academy, providing digital access to children's books for hundreds of thousands of young readers.
- We inspired 83 businesses to prioritise literacy through the Vision for Literacy Business Pledge.
- Our campaigning had a media reach of 447m and an equivalent advertising value of £16.6m. Our Twitter followers reached 91k and our Facebook likes rose to 23k.

To read our Impact report please visit <https://literacytrust.org.uk/about-us/impact-report/>



Our Strategy

Our mission

Our outcomes

Our approach

We give children and young people from disadvantaged communities the literacy skills to succeed in life.

Young people are inspired by books and literacy resources
Parents are confident in supporting the early literacy of their children

Teachers and practitioners are confident and inspired to support literacy
Schools and settings deliver effective literacy activities

Stronger literacy leadership in disadvantaged areas
Leaders take action on literacy - nationally and regionally

By working directly with disadvantaged children and families

By working with schools and settings in disadvantaged areas

By working with communities and partners

We become a more diverse and inclusive charity, better at listening to and working in partnership with communities



Trustee role profile

As a member of our Board of Trustees you will:

- Ensure that the National Literacy Trust complies with its governing document (its Memorandum and Articles of Association), charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations.
- Ensure that the National Literacy Trust pursues its objects as defined in its governing document.
- Ensure the charity uses its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objects.
- Contribute actively to the Board of Trustees by giving firm strategic direction to the National Literacy Trust, setting overall policy, defining goals, setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets.
- Safeguard the reputation and values of the National Literacy Trust.
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of the charity.
- Ensure the financial stability and probity of the organisation.
- Protect and manage the property of the charity and ensure the proper investment of the charity's funds.

In addition to these statutory duties, each trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the Board of Trustees reach sound decisions. This may involve leading discussions, identifying key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, and evaluating or offering advice on other areas in which you have particular expertise.



Person specification

Our intention is to add to the breadth and agility of our Board, so it is fully equipped to support our strategic commitments.

As well as the skills and qualities we expect of all Board members, we are specifically looking for candidates who can bring either:

- education sector leadership and credibility, to ensure our approach remains rigorous and rooted in evidence, and responds to need;
- experience of community regeneration, to ensure our strategy enables us to build local capacity, target our work and respond to both local and national agendas.

You will be able to demonstrate:

- A passion for the role of literacy in society
- A commitment to the mission of the National Literacy Trust
- A willingness to devote the necessary time and commitment to the role of trustee
- Integrity
- Strategic vision
- Good, independent judgement
- An ability to think creatively
- A willingness to speak your mind
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team and to take decisions for the good of the National Literacy Trust
- A commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.

The board of trustees collectively needs skills and experience in the following areas:

- place-based working and multi-agency delivery
- national and local government and statutory bodies
- financial management, income generation and enterprise
- fundraising strategy
- charity leadership and governance
- human resource management
- education policy, strategy and research
- digital strategy
- marketing, communications and campaigning.

We are keen that our Board should become more diverse and representative of the communities we serve and welcome applications from all underrepresented groups.

Terms of Appointment

Time commitment

You should expect to commit one day per month on average and be actively engaged with NLT to fulfil your role. This includes quarterly Board meetings, an annual strategy day, attendance at committee meetings where appropriate and other time spent engaging with our work and supporting the development of key strategic relationships. Board meetings and committee meetings will generally be held online, to facilitate effective engagement with trustees in all areas of the country. Our annual Board strategy day is held in person in London.

Remuneration

This role is voluntary. You will be reimbursed for all reasonable expenses incurred while fulfilling your duties as trustee.

Term

Trustees are elected for a term of three years and at the end of that period will be eligible for re-election for a further term of three years. Terms of office start from the first AGM following your election to the board.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

We are committed to building inclusive and diverse cultures to achieve this and warmly welcome diverse people and experiences to help us do this. As a charity, we recognise that we are on a journey to be more representative of the families we serve at all levels, including within our Board. We are actively seeking diverse talented people from a wide range of backgrounds and are seeking Trustees who will bring to the Board the skills, experience and commitment to drive progress on diversity and inclusion as a feature of our transformation.

Safeguarding

We require all trustees to be committed to promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and take a serious and proactive commitment to effective safeguarding.



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 Rebecca O'Connor at Rebecca.oconnor@starfishsearch.com and we will be happy to arrange a call.

To make an application, please visit: <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/nlt-trustees/> 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 are interested in joining our Board of Trustees and the experiences and qualities you believe you can bring in order to be successful in post.

We would also be grateful if you would also complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

Please also tell us about any dates when you are not available for interview.

Closing date 15th April 2022

