



CANDIDATE PACK FOR CHIEF EXECUTIVE



WELCOME

Imagine your world without words...

Shannon Trust is an award-winning national charity whose purpose is to transform people's lives by unlocking the power of reading and numeracy. Over 60% of people in prison struggle with reading. Some cannot read at all and many also struggle with basic numeracy. This 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.

We now work across all prisons in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland where we train and inspire people in prison who can read and do numeracy to teach those who can't. We believe in the power of reading and education to change lives for the better and our driving ambition is to make this a reality for more people.

Our programmes are unique. There are no exams and no classrooms. The traditional education environment has not been a positive experience for everyone so our support is delivered by prisoners who can read and do numeracy who we train to work with prisoners who cannot, all enabled by our tireless network of volunteers and staff.

We have been through a digital transformation process over the last 18 months and can now provide prisoners with greater access to learning tools. This also supports our work with communities providing our programmes digitally to support the 15% of people in communities who struggle to read.

Whilst we are well known and highly regarded within the Criminal Justice sector, we have ambitions to expand our reach and impact even further, and to enhance our existing partnerships with His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) and other likeminded organisations whose objectives align with ours.

As our new CEO, you will be instrumental in shaping Shannon Trust's future as we embark on a new three-year strategy from 2025. We have been through a seismic period of growth and organisational and cultural transformation under our current chief executive. Our organisation is stable, well managed and well-funded. We are looking for a rare combination, a strategic leader with a real appetite for our mission, combined with strong leadership, organisational and communications skills, who can engage and inspire our volunteers and fully remote workforce.

This role offers an opportunity to work closely with an experienced and committed Board and a strong senior leadership team who are dedicated to our purpose of making sure that there are no bars to reading and numeracy.

This is not 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. If you share our passion and purpose to make a difference and believe in the power of rehabilitation and the transformative effects that education has on a person's life chances, we very much look forward to hearing from you.

Michael Wemms, Chair

ABOUT US

Shannon Trust transforms lives by helping more people experience the positive impact of learning.

We are a registered charity, and work across all prisons in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to train and inspire people in prison who can read and do numeracy to teach those who can't.

Each year, we help thousands of people in prison to learn, so that they can build a different, more positive future for themselves and their families. We also work in partnership with organisations in the community to offer reading and numeracy support to those who are caught in the criminal justice system.

We provide everything needed for someone to learn, including our reading resource, Turning Pages, and our numeracy programme, Count Me In. Sessions are one to one, take place outside formal education, and learners work at their own pace.

Our programmes enable more people in prison to gain fundamental skills that they need to navigate daily life. It provides people in prison with access to education, training and rehabilitative courses that will help them to address their offending, gain new skills and move into employment.

For thousands of people in prison, and in the community, learning to read and understand basic numeracy can completely transform their life.

Read about our story [here](#).

To read our 2023 impact report, annual accounts and to read our 2022-24 strategy please click [here](#).



JOB DESCRIPTION

Job title: Chief Executive

Reports to: Board of Trustees

Direct reports: Director of Business Support, Director of Operations North, Director of Operations South.

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.
- Oversee preparation of the Trust's Annual Report.
- Manage and motivate a high performing, experienced leadership team.
- 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.
- Evolve our already effective communications and marketing strategies with internal and external stakeholders to support our fundraising and ensure we can anticipate, influence, and respond in a timely manner to matters of public interest. We have ambitious plans for our programmes and the support we can deliver. Our engagement and outreach will need to evolve to support these ambitions.
- Strengthen and extend effective working relationships with the HM Prison & Probation Service, prisons, the Ministry of Justice, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons, Ofsted, Criminal Justice sector charities, local authorities, 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 for the media, policy makers and other relevant influencers on all aspects of policy and operations.
- Working with our leadership team, continue to evolve and ensure effective management of our information systems to make sure 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.

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 oversight of all aspects of budgeting and financial management in partnership with the Treasurer and Director of Business Support
- Ensure that the implementation of the Business Plan delivers best value for money.

Staff Management and Leadership

- Sustain and motivate a high performing senior team and inspire the entire staff and volunteer cadre.
- Ensure annual performance objectives are linked to the business plan, which are monitored regularly.
- Foster effective communication within the organisation, ensuring staff and volunteers are aware of the Trust's vision, objectives, and plans.
- Our organisation has grown at pace so working with our leadership team to ensure our internal engagement and connection continue to serve our staff and volunteers is essential.
- Ensure that the Trust's communications systems and channels continue to enable strong collaborative working and effective engagement of our staff and volunteers.
- Ensure that the policies and procedures for effective recruitment, training, support, and performance management are regularly monitored and evaluated against best practice.
- Ensure the volunteer management team is supported in its work to develop the potential of our volunteers and continues to deliver a sustaining a culture where people are motivated and supported to give their best.
- Ensure that the organisation's resources (human, material and financial) remain fit for purpose and evolve to continue to meet the charity's strategic objectives.
- Promote best practice in delivering equality and diversity amongst staff and volunteers.
- Ensure current reporting systems for monitoring and evaluation of performance and effectiveness are fit for purpose.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

KNOWLEDGE AND EXPERIENCE

- 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 including an organisation that has undergone digital transformation.
- The Trust's work involves the development and delivery of digital tools and assets to enable us to provide our services to an expanding range of stakeholders, in prisons and in the wider community. Experience of and the ability to direct and oversee enterprise-wide digital programmes is important.
- Experience of inspiring and maintaining a positive, values-led, high performing, working culture.
- Experience of working with a wide range of stakeholders and the ability to operate in a politically sensitive and public sector environment
- Experience of growing and diversifying income sources including statutory contracts and fundraising with a focus on ensuring robust performance management and quality assurance.
- Sound financial management experience with a firm understanding of risk and working with colleagues to manage and mitigate it.

Desirable

- Knowledge of the Criminal Justice or related sectors.
- Understanding of the nature of challenges faced by adults with poor literacy and numeracy skills.

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

- Has an inspirational and empowering leadership approach and highly developed management skills to enable and motivate staff.
- Strong influencing skills persuasive in high profile situations.
- A confident, engaging, and consultative management style.
- Visible commitment to the Trust's literacy and numeracy 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

The salary for this role is c. £100,000 per annum on a full-time permanent basis.

LOCATION

Remote

PENSION

You will be enrolled into our pension scheme with The People's Pension. We will contribute up to 5%, provided you contribute 7%.

ANNUAL LEAVE

You will get a generous 30 days of annual leave per year (FTE), plus bank holidays.

REWARD GATEWAY

Our employee discount platform, Reward Gateway, is available to all Shannon Trust employees and provides discounts with many major retailers, including most supermarkets, helping you to save money every week.

FLEXIBLE WORKING

We operate a flexi-time scheme, so all employees (subject to the requirements of their role) are able to work flexibly.

VOLUNTEERING

We are grateful for the support of our dedicated team of volunteers, without whom we couldn't help as many learners as we do. In recognition of the importance of volunteering, you can take 2 days per year as paid leave to volunteer for other charities or voluntary groups.

For further details on the brilliant benefits we offer, please visit: <https://www.shannontrust.org.uk/employee-benefits>



HOW TO APPLY

We hope you will consider making an application. If you have questions about the appointment, please email kieran.hughes@starfishsearch.com and we will be happy to respond. To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/shannon-trust-ceo/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- Your CV (no more than three sides).
- A supporting statement (no more than two sides) 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 also be grateful if you would 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.

Closing date: Friday 24th January 2025

Preliminary interviews online: w/c 10th February 2025

Final Panel interviews: w/c 3rd March 2025

