





Welcome from our Chair

Thank you for your interest in BookTrust and our Board.

This is an exciting time to be part of our organisation and we are seeking several new trustees to contribute to the strategic development and continued success of BookTrust.

The last year has been an important one for BookTrust. In 2023/24 our programmes and support will reach around one and a half million children and their families and, as we continue to implement the strategy developed by our Board, we are deliberately targeting more children in poverty.

Delivering on our strategy is ever more important. In these challenging times, we know that early shared reading helps give children the best start in life, addressing some of the negative effects of poverty and the pandemic. We design support based on robust evidence of families' lives and needs. We recently published Reading Together as a call to action on the importance of reading and shared reading to transform outcomes for children. And, in addition to our support from Arts Council England, and from the governments of Wales and Northern Ireland and a significant amount of primary purpose trading activity, we are on a journey to diversify further our income to support the delivery of our ambitious plans.

We are seeking new trustees to bring important additional skills and expertise to help us build and strengthen our Board, our organisation and to contribute as we continue on our journey. We are particularly interested to engage with potential trustees who bring expertise around Systems Thinking (working through complex at scale partnership models), Income Generation, Influencing (especially across national, regional and local government), and Communications and Digital. We are committed to enhancing the diversity of our Board including to reflect our national work and our home base of Leeds

With thanks,
John Coughlan, Chair



About BookTrust

BookTrust is the UK's largest children's reading charity with a history that stretches back over 100 years. This year we will support one and a half million children with reading, and our focus is on supporting children and families from low-income and vulnerable backgrounds, particularly in the early years through our Bookstart programmes. We also provide books and resources for the families of every newborn baby and work with 90% of libraries. We also support school children until the age of 13, working with every state primary school and a quarter of all secondary schools.

Our research and evaluation capabilities are focused on understanding the life-changing benefits of reading and families' attitudes and behaviours. This work informs our design and innovation approach which shows how to create sustained reading behaviours in families.

Operating in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, we have a network of over 6,000 community-based partners which enables us to support at scale low-income families in pockets of deprivation as well as those in the most disadvantaged urban and rural areas. We also have long-term partnership agreements in place with every local authority in England and Wales.

We have expertise in commissioning books and resources and supply chain management, distributing millions of books and resources efficiently every year.

Our approach to getting families reading

BookTrust wants all families to establish a routine of reading together with their babies as early as possible and to continue this throughout the early years and their childhood, as children learn to read independently. Our mission is ambitious.

We seek deep and sustained impact across millions of families in England, Wales and Northern Ireland living in different circumstances, facing different challenges with different needs, barriers and motivations.

Focus Area 1: Early Years Embedding reading in the life of every low-income family.

- Providing inspiring, high-quality books, resources and reading experiences for low-income families with children in the early years designed to motivate and support them to regularly share stories together, giving children the best. This included targeted support to 32% of low-income families with children aged 1-4 through the new Bookstart Pre-schooler programmes.

Focus Area 3: Practitioner Support Supporting early years practitioners to promote shared family reading

- Launching physical and digital Storyteller tools to support community-based practitioners to get families reading. Through BookTrust Storytime, supporting 2,400 libraries to engage new families in library-based activities and encourage families to come back again and again.

Focus Area 2: Children from vulnerable family backgrounds Using shared reading to bring enjoyment and stability to vulnerable children.

- Delivery of Letterbox Club, our long-standing, national book offer for looked after children. Launch of an extensive programme of learning to identify how to step-change future reading experiences for a wider cohort of children from vulnerable family backgrounds.

Focus Area 4: Schools Supporting schools to foster a love of reading.

- BookTrust Represents programme consisting of inspiring online and in-person author events. High-quality resources for reception-aged children. Development work to inform how to increase our future impact for children who most need reading support.

BookTrust's Reach

Learn more about us here:

- [Our Website](#)
- [Reading Together](#)
- [Our 2023 Annual Report](#)
- [Impact Report](#)

2022/23 was year two of our new strategy to support low-income families and children from vulnerable family backgrounds to get reading from the earliest moments in childhood. Our work supported children in every community in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

- Our new early years offer reached **almost 400,000 children** aged 1-4 and 32% of low-income families with young children aged 1-4
- We supported more than **13,000 children from vulnerable family backgrounds** - the majority of these are children aged 3-13 who are looked after
- We delivered books and reading resources to **over 90% of families** with new babies
- We had **over 6,000 early years delivery routes** to low-income families with young children
- Over **1,400 children and families and 650 partners** took part in BookTrust learning activities
- We support **2,400 libraries** and over 50,000 children through BookTrust Storytime
- We had partnership agreements in place with **every local authority** in England and Wales
- We sent out Great Books Guide to **every primary school** in England and Northern Ireland
- We wrote and published **over 370 book reviews** on our Book Finder platform
- Over a third of state secondary schools and **272,000 pupils** participated in Bookbuzz programme

BookTrust: Focusing our support for impact.

While we know that all children benefit from reading, we are committed to offering more targeted support to families from low-income and vulnerable backgrounds because we know these children stand to benefit the most from reading regular and by choice.

We use the term 'low-income families' to indicate those living in relative poverty as defined by the Department for Work and Pensions.

During 2022/23, our support for children from vulnerable family backgrounds focused particularly on children in long-term foster care. Children from vulnerable family backgrounds are also over-represented in low-income backgrounds.



Of the 14 million children in the UK, 29% (4.2 million) live in low-income households.

Our Impact Model

BookTrust designs evidence-led programmes and support to encourage reading for enjoyment. Our high-quality resources and activities are designed for behaviour change and are shared via our extensive partner network, who are specially selected by BookTrust because of their ability to reach those most in need.

BookTrust partners engage with our high quality resource and have the tools and confidence to engage families with reading, as well as seeing its importance.

BookTrust families engage with our offers at multiple moments throughout the early years and school. We provide a diverse range of high-quality book and activities, offering families choice over how to engage with reading, meaning they feel confidence and inspired to read.

Reading becomes a habitual part of everyday life for children from low-income and vulnerable family backgrounds.

Families experience the immediate and long-term benefits of reading:

Overcoming disadvantage caused by inequalities.

Improved social mobility and economic attainment.

Being happier and healthier, with better mental wellbeing and self-esteem.

Improved bonding and positive attainment.

Doing better at school and making more progress across the curriculum.

Improved speech, language and literacy.

Helping children to develop empathy and creativity.

Improved imagination.

Our Impact



82% of low-income families participating in our new early years programmes say they learnt different ways to share stories with their children



88% of partners in our early years network say our resources and activities supported them in their work



92% of families rate our early years resources as either good or excellent



84% of low-income families participating in our new Book Trust Early Years offers say these prompted them to read more with their children



78% of partners in our early years network say BookTrust resources are high quality



96% of children in care receiving Letterbox Club parcels say they like or love using the resources



98% of families say they enjoyed using our new early years resources and activities with their children



68% of children in care receiving Letterbox Club parcels say they now read more on their own



72% of families receiving our Bookstart Baby pack say it helped them to find new ways to spend time with their child



Our Funding

Our key funder in England is Arts Council England who fund us on as one of their National Portfolio Organisations.

We are one of the top 10 funded organisations in their portfolio. We reflect Arts Council England's commitment to the early years and children as readers. Our funding reflects both the importance and quality of the work we do and the Arts Council's deep commitment to supporting children and young people, and literature – aligned to their 10-year strategy Let's Create.

We are also grateful for the funding we receive from the Welsh government and in Northern Ireland, the Department for Education and Education Authority, for recognising the power of reading to transform lives through their funding for Book Trust programmes.

We are proud of our large-scale traded programmes (Letterbox Club and BookBuzz) which provide a significant income stream.

The Mohn Westlake Foundation provides ongoing and generous support to our work with disadvantaged and vulnerable children.

We have worked with Waterstones for more than ten years with a special partnership supported by Waterstones staff and customers, which over the past decade has raised £2 million for BookTrust to support disadvantaged and vulnerable children, and has supported the Waterstones Children's Laureate.

In addition to support from trusts, foundations and corporates, we have made excellent progress in generating long-term unrestricted funding from our individual giving Friends scheme and other campaigns.

Continuing to diversify our funding to maintain our future sustainability and do more to meet our strategic ambitions continues to be a key strategic priority.

Our Trustees play an important role guiding and supporting the continued development of a broad funding base to enable us to deliver our strategic plans.

To 2022/23, our total income was £11.9m. BookTrust is fortunate in having reserves which underpin financial security and there is a planned programme to draw on these particularly to fund development and innovation work as part of our planned strategy.

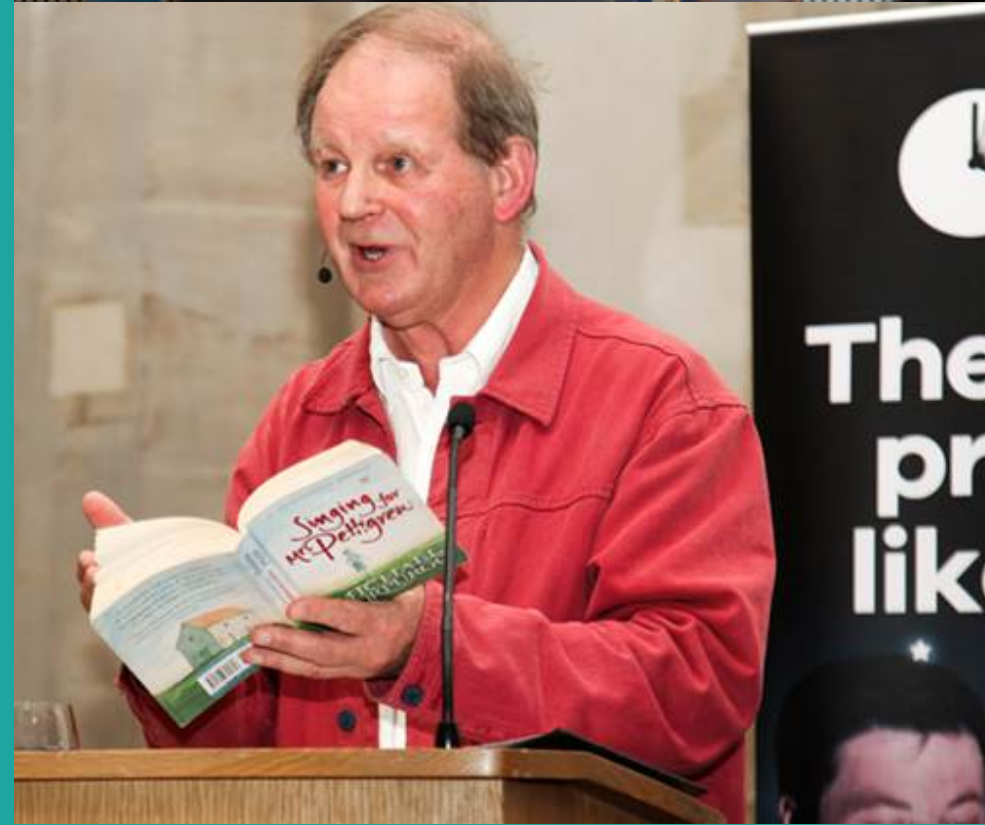
Our Patron

Her Majesty The Queen is BookTrust's Patron. Her Majesty took over the reins as patron from HRH The Duke of Edinburgh in 2011. The Queen has become increasingly well-known for her deep personal interest in literature and literacy and is very supportive of the wider cause of children's reading.



Our President

Sir Michael Morpurgo is the award-winning author of over 120 books for children, including *War Horse*, which has been adapted into a phenomenally successful stage show and film. Among his many accolades, he has won the Smarties Prize, The Writers Guild Award and the Blue Peter Book Award. The former Children's Laureate has been a key figure in children's literature for many years and speaks with great passion about the joy of books and storytelling for young people.



Joining our Board

BookTrust now has an opportunity for three values-driven individuals who are passionate about tackling disadvantage and inequality to join our fantastic Board of committed Trustees.

Our Trustees will be enthusiastic, with a clear passion for the life-changing benefits of reading and an authentic commitment to our mission and aims.

BookTrust enjoys a highly qualified and passionate Board of Trustees, who bring with them a passion for reading and commitment to addressing inequality and disadvantage.

The tenure of our Chair, John Coughlan, runs until February 2027, and our Board structure includes a Vice-Chair and Honorary Treasurer. We also have three main Committees:

- EDI & Remuneration
- Finance, Risk & Audit
- Nominations

We also have occasional task and finish groups. Lead trustees also bring expertise in areas such as e.g. safeguarding, people & culture, and environmental sustainability.

The day-to-day business is overseen by the Executive Leadership Team led by our [CEO, Diana Gerald](#).

We wish to engage with individuals from a wide range of backgrounds and are committed improving representation, engagement and inclusion reflecting our diversity aims as an organisation and for our Board, including gender, geography, ethnicity, disability and across our wide range of stakeholders.

We are keen to ensure that some members of our Board bring lived experience of the issues facing the families that we support.

As a national organisation, it is a strategic priority to ensure appropriate regional representation on the Board, particularly across the North of England.

In addition to the core Trustee skills outlined in the Person Specification, **for this intake of Trustees we seek specific ability in four areas to enhance the diversity of thought and capability on the Board.**

- Income Generation
- Systems Thinking (working through complex at scale partnership models)
- Influencing (especially across national, regional and local government)
- Communications and digital.

New Trustees will also be asked to take on either a Committee role and/ or a Lead Trustee role in an area of expertise. You can learn about our Trustees and Governance [here](#).

Trustee Responsibilities

- Contribute meaningfully to the strategic development of BookTrust as an ambitious, highly successful organisation committed to getting children reading.
- Consider the organisation as a whole, and its beneficiaries, in all discussion of strategic direction, planning and activity.
- Engage positively and collaboratively in Board discussions bringing fresh ideas and new perspectives and recognising the importance of diversity of opinion and views.
- Question intelligently, debate and challenge constructively and thoughtfully, and determine outcomes fairly.
- Develop positive and constructive relationships with the Chief Executive and Executive Leadership Team acting as an objective, critical friend.
- Act with integrity, objectivity and honesty, and promote openness and trust.
- Represent BookTrust at key events and meetings.
- Understand and enrich the partnership working which is so integral to BookTrust's success, building strong relationships with our stakeholders.



Person Specification

- A deep and demonstrable understanding of the role of the non-executive and a clear grasp of the support and constructive challenge elements of the role.
- Excellent strategic skills with the capacity to think creatively and offer fresh perspectives.
- An understanding of the particular challenges and opportunities for a small organisation with large-scale national reach and profile, including driving continual performance improvement.
- The relationship-building skills and gravitas to be a compelling ambassador for BookTrust in the complex, multi-stakeholder environment in which we operate, and also to be an effective team player within the Board.
- Impartiality, high levels of integrity, and sound judgment.
- The ability to commit sufficient time to the Board.
- For this intake, we are prioritising applications from candidates with specific experience in Income Generation, Systems Thinking, Influencing, Communications & Digital.





Terms

Time commitment: We estimate the total time commitment to be around one day per month on average, which will vary for e.g. Board away days.

Location: Our head office is in central Leeds, and we also have a large office in London, regional staff across England and offices in Wales and Northern Ireland. Currently, two Board meetings take place in London, one in Leeds and one is virtual (we our meetings annually, including location and format). Our Away Day is always in person and is generally in London. Our EDI & Remuneration Committee meetings are virtual and our Finance Risk & Audit Committee meetings are hybrid. In addition, we have occasional virtual Board Briefings.

Remuneration: Unremunerated; reasonable expenses will be covered.

Term of appointment: An initial term of 3 years, which can be renewed for two terms. (although our usual approach is for trustees to serve a maximum of 6 years).

Support: The Board is supported by our part-time Company Secretary and Head of Governance. We also access legal or other expert advice as necessary. BookTrust will provide induction and onboarding for all new Trustees.

How to Apply

GatenbySanderson have been retained to support the appointment process. The application portal can be found here: <https://www.gatenbysanderson.com/job/GSe107501>.

Please submit your CV along with a Supporting Statement evidencing how you meet the person specification. Please be ready to provide the names, positions, organisations and contact details for two referees; one should be your current or most recent employer. We will always gain your permission before we contact referees.

Let us know any difficulty you may have with the indicative timetable (please see below). Check that your contact details are correct before you submit. Once you have submitted your application, you will receive an automated email confirmation. If you do not receive, please email contactus@gatenbysanderson.com.

Indicative Timetable

- **Closing Date:** 5pm, Friday 10 May 2024
- **Preliminary Interviews** with GatenbySanderson: from 24 May
- **Final Interviews:** 17 & 20 June, with opportunities to meet informally with the Chair, CEO and Trustees prior to interview

Interviews may be conducted remotely, via video conference. Final panels will be in person in London or Leeds. Please advise on any challenges with the timetable upon your application for the role.

For further information or an informal conversation about this role, please contact:

- **Researcher Oliver Startup** at oliver.startup@gatenbysanderson.com
- **Consultant Emily Nevins** at emily.nevins@gatenbysanderson.com