



Job description

Job title:	Project Officer
Salary:	£25,000 per year
Contract type:	Permanent
Hours:	Flexible, 28 to 35 hours per week
Reports to:	Hub Manager, Birmingham

Introduction

One person in six has poor literacy skills that impact on every area of their life. A child without good literacy skills will struggle to succeed at school, and as an adult they could be locked out of the job market. Poverty doubles the likelihood that, by the age of five, a child's literacy skills will be below average.

The National Literacy Trust is dedicated to improving 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. We run Literacy Hubs and campaigns in communities where low levels of literacy and social mobility are seriously impacting people's lives. We support schools and early years settings to deliver outstanding literacy provision, and we campaign to make literacy a priority for politicians, businesses and parents. Our research and analysis make us the leading authority on literacy and drive our interventions. Literacy is a vital element of action against poverty and our work changes children's life stories.

We are a rapidly growing organisation, with ambitious plans and amazing staff. We have more than 25 years' experience of delivering programmes and campaigns to improve literacy and partnerships are an essential part of our work – with the education sector, with businesses and with community partners. We work closely with both national and local government. Our funders and partners include high street brands such as McDonald's and WHSmith, and large multinationals such as Lancôme, KPMG and PwC. We have an office in Vauxhall, London, as well as people working to support our community activity around the country.

This role will work in our communities and local areas team supporting the delivery of Birmingham Stories, our Hub in Birmingham.

A Hub is a ten-year, place-based response to the challenges of intergenerational low literacy, working with a range of partners to shape and deliver activity as part of a local strategy. Each Hub has a different approach to tackle low literacy based on the assets and needs in the area.

Birmingham Stories brings together the expertise of the National Literacy Trust and the University of Birmingham. Academic research and the resources of a civic university are deployed to raise the literacy levels of teenagers and adults facing significant challenges.

The postholder will work closely with the Hub Manager as well our Hubs team in the North and central England and in London, to support the delivery of our Birmingham Hub.

They will also spend approximately one day a week supporting the coordination of a new programme, First Words Together, in partnership with Birmingham Forward Steps. This will expand on an existing parental engagement programme (Early Words Together at Two) to reach parents earlier, when their child is one. It will support the early identification of children who need language support before the age of two by building knowledge and confidence among early years practitioners and professionals whilst also developing the skills and confidence of parents/carers, enabling them to consistently support their child's speech, language and communication.

Under the guidance of the Hub Manager, the postholder will help to coordinate the training, support and administration involved in working with practitioners in 22 children's centres and 25 health centres across ten Birmingham localities, over the term of the project.

This role is available full time (35 hours per week) or part time (28 hours per week). For full time work, the postholder will also spend approximately a day per week supporting the coordination of other National Literacy Trust projects which include delivery in Birmingham.

Working with us

Our people are our most important asset and we value and respect diversity in all its forms (seen and unseen). We particularly welcome applications from those from Black and Asian candidates, people with disabilities and candidates from the communities in which we work. We would like to increase representation of these groups among our staff as we know greater diversity will lead to an even greater impact for our work. We are also committed to providing training, mentoring and support to help us bring new perspectives and experiences into the organisation, and ensure that our staff have the skills and understanding they need to talk confidently about the challenges communities face and our role in addressing them.

We encourage a flexible working approach that allows each person in our team to work in a way that suits their circumstances and enables them to contribute to our success, whoever they are.

As well as a competitive salary, we offer benefits including a generous leave allowance totalling 39 days pro rata (including bank holidays and office closure between Christmas and New Year), pensions contributions of 8% of annual salary, a cycle to work scheme, season ticket loans, employee assistance programme and other health and wellbeing benefits.

Part 1: Job profile

1.1 Main purpose of job

This role is responsible for supporting our work in Birmingham to achieve and evidence the desired outcomes and outputs. It will support two main strands of work.

Support for our Hub, Birmingham Stories, will focus on volunteer engagement and working with secondary age pupils, young people and adults. This will involve developing and delivering programmes including Literacy Champions, coordinating student, school and community engagement across all programmes and providing general support to the Hub Manager.

The postholder will also support the Hub Manager in delivering an early years programme, First Words Together, across the city. This will primarily be administrative and logistical support.

1.2 Position in organisation

This role is part of the communities and local areas team, which has staff based in London and around the country, including a central project management team and Hub and programme delivery roles in 14 Hub locations. The postholder will be based in Birmingham and report directly to the Birmingham Hub Manager.

1.3 Working contacts

Internal

Close working with the Hub Manager

Close working with the communities and local areas team in London and across the country

Close working with the marketing and communications team

Work with the development team as well as programme managers across the charity

Work with the research team

External

Regular contact with University of Birmingham staff and students including lead researchers, communications team, student experience and widening participation teams

Regular contact with secondary schools and further education settings as well as early years settings, children's centres and library workforce

Contact with project participants, volunteers and beneficiaries, as well as volunteer coordinators

Work with community groups and other local project coordinators

Part 2: Key duties and responsibilities

2.1 Literacy Champions

- Identify opportunities to recruit and train volunteers
- Engage potential volunteers and organise training events and volunteer opportunities
- Initiate DBS checks and keep accurate records
- Coordinate student engagement working with University departments including Student Experience Officers, Widening Participation Team and the Student Union
- Develop the Literacy Champions programme working with Birmingham Adult Education Service, schools and wider community partners
- Maintain regular contact with and support volunteers to develop and deliver activities which promote literacy in their communities
- Support all evaluation activities, ensuring records are accurate and submitted in a timely fashion

2.2 Community organisations and schools liaison

- Act as the principal point of contact for all schools and children's centres involved in the work of the Hub and provide ongoing support, including promoting and delivering programmes, competitions and other in-school activities
- Liaise with community organisations regarding all Hub activities, and assist with the organisation of activities
- Maintain excellent records of community organisation and school sign up and engagement
- Facilitate CPD and programmatic activity as appropriate for schools and children's centres, and provide ongoing support

2.3 General project administration

- Contribute to project plans and budgets
- Assist with the organisation of events and all associated communications
- Update and maintain records on Salesforce
- Liaise with children's centres involved in an early years project
- Gather and organise assessment data provided by early years practitioners
- Support the campaigns and communications team
- Support the work of the Lead Researchers and key contacts across the University of Birmingham as required
- Help to produce and distribute resource / materials as required

The postholder may be required to undertake other activities as deemed appropriate, and to support activities that contribute to the growth and sustainability of the charity, and to the sharing and development of our organisational knowledge.

Part 3: Person specification

3.1 Essential experience

- Delivering programmes in communities and schools
- Project support in a charity or educational context
- Recruiting, supporting and training volunteers
- Maintenance of project plans and budgets and reporting against them
- Providing general office administration support
- Record keeping and filing
- Coordinating goods and supplies, including placing and tracking orders

3.1.1 Desirable experience

- Experience of working with a University
- Handling sensitive/confidential information
- Using a CRM database

3.2 Knowledge and understanding

- Good knowledge of secondary school provision and work with adults
- Knowledge of the Birmingham community, its challenges and relevant local organisations
- Excellent knowledge of volunteer management and safeguarding
- Understanding of the principles of effective communication

3.3 Skills

- Strong attention to detail, with excellent written and spoken English
- Clear and confident communicator, able to talk with staff at all levels
- Logical and well organised
- Stakeholder management
- Motivated, proactive and able to think outside the box in unplanned situations
- Team player, adaptable in situations of frequent priority and focus change
- IT skills, including Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook and databases
- Working independently and problem solving

3.4 Other

- Commitment to equality and diversity
- Imagination and enthusiasm to develop and deliver literacy initiatives
- Ability to foster excellent relationships with participants and a wide range of community and strategic partners
- Clear interest in and knowledge and understanding of literacy and social justice issues/voluntary sector

Part 4: Summary of terms and conditions of service

- Location:** The postholder will be an employee of the National Literacy Trust. The post is based at the University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT, with scope for home and flexible working.
- Probation period:** This post is subject to a 12-week probationary period.
- Notice period:** This post is subject to a four-week notice period.
- Safeguarding:** The postholder will adhere to the National Literacy Trust's safeguarding policy for children, young people and vulnerable adults. This post is also subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service check.
- Expenses:** The role will require travel within the UK. Out-of-pocket expenses will be paid when incurred in accordance with our expenses policy.
- Annual leave:** You will receive a total of 39 days per year (pro rata for part time staff), made up of 28 days' annual leave plus the closure of the office on all bank holidays and from Christmas Day to New Year's Day inclusive.
- Pension:** The National Literacy Trust will contribute 8% of annual salary for those who qualify for our group pension plan.
- Other benefits:** We provide a Cycle to Work scheme, season ticket travel loans, employee assistance programme and access to other health and wellbeing benefits including discounted gym membership, dental plans and health assessments.