

seven stories

The National Centre for Children's Books

Vacancy for new Trustees at Seven Stories

About the charity

Seven Stories, The National Centre for Children's Books, is a registered cultural charity, trading company and an Arts Council accredited museum. We have a growing Collection which includes work from some of the best-selling and most influential authors and illustrators of the last 100 years including Enid Blyton, David McKee, Philip Pullman, John Agard, Nick Sharratt, Judith Kerr, Sita Brahmachari and Michael Morpurgo.

We provide the only exhibition space in the UK wholly dedicated to the work of children's writers and illustrators. We bring books to life through a creative programme of innovative exhibitions and exciting events, we invite visitors to discover the 'stories behind the stories' that we know and love, and to feel excited and inspired to tell their own stories, in their own ways.

We are seeking to appoint new trustees who have the skills and experience to help support

- our Vision to put stories at the heart of every childhood, empowering young people to understand their world and imagine their future
- our Mission to work with children's books to create playful and profound experiences for children and young people, to fire their imagination and creativity, and deepen their understanding of themselves and the world

Trustee vacancies

We are looking for new Trustees to provide strategic and inspirational leadership to the charity as we seek further growth and delivery of our charitable objectives.

We are looking for experienced Trustees with a background in one of the following areas (*Indicates positions that can be considered as development opportunities if you do not have previous experience in a Governance role):

- Charity Finance
- Community and Outreach

- Entrepreneurial / Commercial skills

You will not be expected to take sole responsibility for these areas, as the board is collectively responsible for its actions and decisions.

Further detail on each role can be found in the appendices.

Trustee Role

An interest in children's literature is desirable rather than essential but the successful candidate must have empathy with Seven Stories' mission.

The principal duties of our trustees include:

- Ensuring Seven Stories is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit
- Being committed to good governance by ensuring the charity complies with its governing documents, relevant legislation and regulatory requirements
- Determining the overall strategic direction of the charity by agreeing policies, budgets, business plan and objectives, and reviewing performance against key targets
- Exercising overall control of the charity's financial affairs and ensure appropriate systems and controls are adhered to
- Providing support, advice and challenge to the Chief Executive and Senior Leadership Team
- Actively supporting the charity in achieving its fundraising targets
- Make decisions and review and authorise policies in line with the scheme of delegation

Please also refer to the Charity Commission website for general responsibilities of a trustee at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved>

Commitment:

- Minimum of 4 board meeting per annum (early evening)
- Annual Board away day
- Sub-committee meetings as required (at least quarterly)
- Require attendance at 2 Seven Stories events each year (minimum)

- Active role in fundraising
- Length of service initial 3-year term

Application process

Seven Stories encourages and supports equality, diversity and inclusion and we are very keen to work towards a more diverse Board of Trustees.

We respect the protected characteristics of the Equality Act and applicants with relevant skills, knowledge and experience from all backgrounds are encouraged. We are committed to ensuring that people with a diverse range of skills and experience are encouraged to apply and contribute fully as trustees.

We will strive to remove the barriers that prevent people from applying to become trustees and are keen to recruit and support people with a wide range of skills and lived experience.

We also welcome applications from people under 30 years of age.

The closing date for applications is 15 January 2025. Applicants should send a letter of application and short CV to lucy.smyth@sevenstories.org.uk. To arrange a confidential conversation or if you have any access requirements and need support with the application process, please also contact lucy.smyth@sevenstories.org.uk

Appendix 1 – Detail of experience required

Finance

- Qualified accountant with background in charity accounts
- Experience in governance
- Seven Stories has an experienced finance team who are responsible for managing the charity finances: this role is one of oversight and providing a strategic perspective to the Board.

A separate job description is available with full details of our requirement for this role

Community and Outreach

- A voice from our local community with strong understanding of emerging needs
- Sensitive to the wide impact of cost of living and other current pressures on local economy

Entrepreneurial / Commercial skills

- Business growth experience
- Preferably an F&B background
- Will also sit on the Trading Company Board and will be expected to seek opportunities across the company

* For most of these posts, we will be seeking applicants with prior Trustee and Governance experience. However, for those marked with an asterisk, we will be able to accommodate developmental opportunities across desired positions.

Appendix 2 – Seven Stories information

Who are we?

We are a registered charity and an Arts Council accredited museum who exist to make literature more accessible and put stories at the heart of every childhood.

We do this through our museum and visitor centre in Newcastle, and through extensive events and programme for the public, schools and community outreach audiences.

We have a growing Collection which includes work from some of the best-selling and most influential authors and illustrators of the last 100 years, which forms the heart of our education, exhibition and outreach work.

We provide the only exhibition space in the UK wholly dedicated to the work of children's writers and illustrators. We bring books to life through a creative programme of innovative exhibitions and exciting events, we invite visitors to discover the 'stories behind the stories' we know and love, and to feel excited and inspired to tell their own stories, in their own ways.

How are you funded?

50% of our total income is from the Arts Council. The remaining running costs and project costs are funded through earned income, voluntary giving, corporate support and grants.

Why do you do what you do?

Reading for pleasure has been recognised as a critical life skill and we believe we have a special responsibility, especially post-pandemic, to put stories at the heart of every single childhood, regardless of background or place.

A love of reading not only develops essential literacy skills and helps children become fluent readers and speakers, thinkers and writers, it connects them with other ideas, experiences, places and times; fuelling imaginations and creativity which can lead to new ways of thinking, doing and living, and inspiring the thinkers, creators, carers, educators and entrepreneurs of the future.

Where can I find out more?

Visitor Centre website: www.sevenstories.org.uk

Digital Exhibition website: <https://sevenstories.online/>

Why are you called Seven Stories?

Named after the iconic building's seven floors, and because it is said that there are just seven story plots from which *all* tales are told – *Overcoming the Monster, Voyage and Return, Rags to Riches, Comedy, Tragedy, Rebirth, Quest*.