

Darren Lester

Dundee, UK. Open to relocation

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SUMMARY

Senior frontend engineer (React/TypeScript) with 10+ years of experience, including 7 years shipping on product teams across B2B platforms, consumer products, and growth. After a period in engineering management delivering across four product areas, now focused on senior IC work combining product ownership, technical depth, and cross-team influence.

- Built the frontend for Partnerize's new analytics experience - the primary interface for enterprise clients including Fortune 500 brands to analyse affiliate campaign performance
- Built Saved Reports system with frontend migration system preserving backward compatibility across 4+ years
- Improved Core Web Vitals, increasing Good Page Experience impressions 14x to drive organic search visibility and acquisition

TECHNICAL SKILLS

React, TypeScript, Next.js, Node.js, Chrome DevTools, Testing, Web Performance, Accessibility, CI/CD

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Career Break (Travel and Development)

Feb 2025 – Feb 2026

- Built [Retirement Simulator](#) to explore AI-assisted development (React, Vite, Cursor, Claude)
- Completed courses on React 19, AI-assisted development (Claude, Cursor, prompt engineering, MCP), Tailwind

Partnerize

Nov 2022 – Feb 2025

Front End Engineering Manager. Remote (Newcastle, UK)

Leading global SaaS platform for partnership and affiliate marketing, with 350 employees, \$10B+ in transactions through its network and \$50M revenue.

Rejoined Partnerize as a hands-on engineering manager. Contributed directly to delivery across Analytics Insights, Dashboard, Comms Tool, and Partner Management - products used daily by partnership managers to track performance, communicate with partners, and manage their affiliate networks. Managed 3–5 mid to lead frontend and backend engineers (10 across tenure).

- Supported a Senior Engineer's progression to Lead role by coaching them to voice technical priorities and enabling meaningful tech debt ownership that boosted their morale and impact
- Led frontend dependency upgrade initiative (React 16 to 18, Jest, Testing Library), authoring project charter, resolving critical test failures blocking migration, and coordinating cross-team execution
- Debugged and resolved critical bug affecting major client's dashboard with Chinese currency data, then refactored scattered currency handling logic into unified solution, eliminating a class of localisation issues across the platform
- Became go-to resource for complex frontend testing challenges and flaky test resolution across teams
- Optimised deployments globally by shifting pre-production testing to before merges, eliminating master reverts
- Eliminated costly merge conflicts and increased release frequency by improving the team's branching workflow, resulting in faster delivery to users and reduced rework; approach later adopted by another team

Tech stack: React, TypeScript, Redux, Jest, Testing Library, Cypress, BrowserStack, Storybook, Docker, GitLab

Stockopedia

Oct 2021 – Nov 2022

Senior Front End Engineer. Remote (Newcastle, UK)

Award-winning stock market research platform for active investors, with 30 employees and \$5M revenue.

Worked on the Growth team to improve organic acquisition and conversion, collaborating closely with the Product Manager to prioritise against business metrics including search visibility, page experience, and signup conversion.

- Ran A/B experiments varying the type and depth of free data exposed on the marketing site to find the right balance between showcasing the platform's value and driving signups

- Migrated marketing pages to Next.js, updated UI for critical pages and created new landing pages to improve user experience and conversion
- Increased Good Page Experience impressions from 1k/day to 14k on mobile and 10k/day to 400k on desktop by improving Core Web Vitals through optimisations across render-blocking JS, bundle size, third-party tags, and image loading priorities - directly improving the platform's organic search eligibility
- Extensively cleaned up search engine indexing by correcting redirects, noindex directives, canonical links, and disavowing spam links to ensure the right pages were surfacing in search results and improve search rankings

Tech stack: React, TypeScript, Next.js, Zustand, Search Console, Google Tag Manager, Google Optimize, GitHub

Partnerize

Aug 2019 – Oct 2021

Senior Front End Software Engineer. Remote (Newcastle, UK)

Aug 2020 – Oct 2021

Front End Software Engineer. Newcastle, UK

Aug 2019 – Aug 2020

Built the frontend for Partnerize's new analytics experience from early development through delivery - the primary interface for enterprise clients including Fortune 500 brands to monitor the performance of their affiliate campaigns, partners, and products. Worked as part of a cross-functional product team alongside product management, design, QA, frontend and backend engineers, contributing to API design and UI decisions.

- Collaborated with Product/Design to define and build a flagship Report Builder that simplified data discovery - complex state management, ambiguous requirements, iterative delivery
- Delivered Saved Reports system independently; built frontend migration system preserving backward compatibility across 4+ years
- Led frontend testing strategy across all 5 engineering teams to reduce reliance on expensive Selenium tests and decrease CI/deploy times; owned tooling, authored guidelines, drove adoption and best practices through pairing and knowledge sharing, and managed flaky test resolution
- Reduced render time of analytics reports by 60% by performance profiling, optimising network requests, eliminating unnecessary React renders and optimising CSS-in-JS usage to reduce scripting overhead - directly improving the day-to-day experience for partnership managers working with large datasets
- Enhanced accessibility in component library through component contributions and best practice advocacy
- Contributed to hiring, reviewing CVs; creating technical interview questions on React, CSS and testing; conducting 30+ interviews and live coding tasks; providing input to hiring decisions

Tech stack: React, TypeScript, Redux, Jest, Testing Library, Cypress, BrowserStack, Storybook, Docker, GitLab

Findmypast

May 2018 – Aug 2019

Software Development Engineer. Dundee, UK

Online genealogy service with 13M registered users, 150 employees, and \$30M revenue.

Worked in a cross-functional team building a new family tree web application for Findmypast's 13M users, contributing across frontend (React, GraphQL) and backend services (Node.js, with exposure to Go and Elixir).

- Built core family tree features including node creation flow, profile editing, photo carousel, and guided onboarding
- Mentored an intern for 3 months, teaching React and industry best practices through pair programming

University of Dundee, Software Engineering roles, Dundee, UK

Nov 2014 – Mar 2018

Built C++/Java components for PANGU simulation tool for European Space Agency; full stack web development at Dundee Satellite Receiving Station.

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

Japanese Language Proficiency Test N2

2015

MSc Applied Computing (Distinction), University of Dundee

2014

BSc Physics (1st Class), University of Dundee

2013

PERSONAL PROJECTS

Furigana Toggle (2017, maintained) – Chrome/Firefox extension to support Japanese reading practice. 3k users