



READ EASY UK TRUSTEE ROLE DESCRIPTION AND PERSON SPECIFICATION

*"It's been a life-changing experience. Last week I read a book to my grandson.
I never read to my children because I couldn't."*

Peter, from Read Easy Poole

What we do

Read Easy helps adults learn to read by providing them with free, confidential, one-to-one coaching from trained volunteers. There are around 2.4m adults in England who never learnt to read properly at school.*

Read Easy UK is the umbrella charity that enables volunteers to set up affiliated Read Easy groups to provide this service in their own communities. Each volunteer group is supported by Read Easy UK's paid, part-time Regional Advisers and free-lance Trainers. Currently (October 2017) Read Easy has 23 groups across South West and Central England, and one in South Wales. Since it was established, Read Easy has already helped over 600 adults learn to read.

Affiliated Read Easy groups recruit and organise local volunteers to work as reading coaches with 'new readers' on a confidential, one-to-one basis. Each reading pair is given a choice of approved venues where they can meet at a time to suit themselves and work without being overlooked by others, whilst always having someone else on the premises. Reading pairs meet twice a week, for just half an hour at a time, and work through a phonics-based reading manual until they have reached a satisfactory reading level. For those who wish, this course can be followed by a secondary stage of literacy support that includes writing.

By helping people to reach a reasonable level of literacy, Read Easy aims to enable them to grow in confidence and self-esteem, move on to access other learning and qualifications, improve their employment opportunities and take a fuller and more effective part in family and home life, their local communities and society as a whole. For more details about what Read Easy does and to see some short films of people who have learnt to read with Read Easy, please see our website: www.readeasy.org.uk

* 7.1% of adults in England (2.5m people) never learnt to read properly at school and are only at Entry Levels 1 or 2 on the Adult Curriculum: *Skills for Life Survey, 2011*, Dept. BIS

Read Easy's opportunities and challenges for 2017 and beyond

The first Read Easy group was set up in Dorset in 2010 and the charity has since grown rapidly to try to meet the demand for this type of one-to-one reading support. In line with this growth, Read Easy UK has developed a well-structured, highly-professional, very cost-effective and easily replicable volunteer model. In addition, our small team of part-time staff and free-lance trainers are highly qualified and experienced and add great value to the support we can offer our volunteers. Consequently, Read Easy is increasingly recognised for the quality of the service it provides and as the *only* organisation attempting to provide this service on a national level. Nonetheless, we are still a relatively small charity.

In response to continuing demand from many parts of the country, we are now looking to establish new Read Easy 'regions' in London & the South East and in North West England. Although the systems are in place to make this relatively straightforward, it represents a significant scaling up of the organisation and further challenges for the future as we position ourselves to become a truly national organisation with the funding required to match.

Read Easy UK's Board of Trustees is therefore looking for new members who will be able to help support the charity as it transitions to an exciting new level.

Trustee role

All Trustees share responsibility for the organisation. The main responsibilities of Board Members will be to:

- oversee the strategic direction of the charity as it scales up its organisation to meet national demand, and support the Chief Executive in managing this growth;
- use their professional expertise to help guide the process;
- ensure the organisation works within the law and in line with its governing document and policies;
- keep informed about the activities of the charity in order to maintain effective oversight;
- take a financial overview and ensure that the organisation's finances are adequate and responsibly managed;
- promote the work and safeguard the reputation of Read Easy UK.

Meetings and time commitment

Board meetings are currently held five times a year in Blockley in the North Cotswolds, in January, March, June, August/September and November. Meetings generally start at 6.00 pm and last no more than two hours. Trustees should also allow a certain amount of extra time for preparation for, and follow up from these meetings, as well as some time occasionally for other involvement.

Background and experience currently looked for:

Although the Trustees are pleased to hear from anybody who thinks they have useful skills to contribute, they are looking at the moment particularly for people with:

- significant experience of scaling organisations;
- significant experience in the field of adult basic skills education, preferably at a senior or national level;
- significant current personal networks of benefit to Read Easy;

Personal qualities

We are seeking people who:

- demonstrate an interest and commitment to the work, values and vision of Read Easy;
- are clear thinkers and good communicators;

- understand and are willing to enforce the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship;
- are willing and able to devote the necessary time to the role;
- are willing to provide advice to the Chief Executive or other Board members on an ad hoc basis, according to their expertise;
- have a strong commitment to improving the lives of the disadvantaged in our society.

The position of Trustee is purely voluntary; in return for giving time and expertise you will be offered the opportunity to make a real contribution to changing the lives of many disadvantaged people in this country. Trustees will be welcome to visit Read Easy groups from time to time to see the work that is being done, as well as to meet volunteers from all over the country at our annual conference in October. Travel expenses can be claimed by Trustees where necessary.

If you would like to apply to become a Trustee, we should be very grateful if you could send your CV (including two referees), along with a letter outlining the reasons why you are interested in the role and the contribution you think you could make.

If you would like to discuss the role further, please contact the Chief Executive, Ginny Williams-Ellis at ginny@readeasy.org.uk or on 01386 700883, who can tell you more herself and/or put you in touch with our Chair of Trustees.

“The other day I went shopping to Sports Direct and bought some t-shirts. I got home, tried them on and 2 didn’t fit. So I took them back. That’s the first time I’ve ever taken something back. I felt good doing it. I had enough courage to take them back instead of chucking them in the back of the wardrobe.” Steve, from Read Easy Winchester