



Read Easy

Helping adults learn to read



Trustee Introduction Pack

Who we are

Thank you for considering becoming a Trustee and Chair.

We help adults to transform their lives by learning to read. We do this by developing local groups and training volunteers to provide personalised, one-to-one coaching that is free and confidential, both in-person and online.

Since we started in 2010, we have coached thousands of Readers, empowering them to overcome barriers and unlock opportunities. Our impact has grown dramatically, and we now have almost 100 local groups and 2,000 trained volunteers helping Readers throughout England. Readers talk about how their lives have been transformed here: readeasy.org.uk/success-stories/

Vision



Every adult who wants to learn to read, can.



Impact

SARAH

'There was a time when I would panic or change the subject when it came to reading with my twin daughters. I have always struggled, but to deny your own children the chance to hear you read to them was heart wrenching. **It's the best feeling in the world to be able to read with your children.'**



90
areas nationally helping adults to learn to read

JEFF

'The most important thing for me is to be able to read stories to my son who has just started school. That's my goal. I'd also like to be able to understand more in work, and have other options career-wise for the future. Reading will open those doors for me. **If I have a chance of something better I'm going to take it.'**



Over
2,000
graduated readers!

Over
1,600
adults were learning to read with Read Easy in 2024



TERRY

'I can now read those letters I receive from the council, my doctors and the hospital, I don't have to ask anyone else to help me anymore.' The biggest impact has been on Terry's confidence. He says, '**I wouldn't have been able to sit and talk to you before this. I am much more confident in myself now'**.

2.4
million adults in the UK struggle with reading

Our Values

By 2029, Read Easy will be a Reading Movement – coaching Readers, raising awareness, tackling stigma, advocating change.

The Readers' interests will be at the heart of everything we do, and we will be well known as a national Reading Movement. Our volunteers will be coaching thousands of Readers every year, supported by a small but highly effective, well-resourced and sustainable central team.



Reader focus

We exist for our Readers.



Togetherness

We are one team, always respectful, supporting one another.



Empowerment

We enable Readers, volunteers and employees.



Aspiration

We are ambitious and aspire to help many more Readers.



Fairness

We stand for equity and do what is right.



Excellence

We expect excellence from everyone.



Strategic Ambitions

We have just agreed our strategy for the next five years. Our ten top targets are to:

- Double the number of Readers we coach to 3,000 a year
- Involve Readers in the continuing improvement of our service
- Develop our online coaching for Readers who cannot access services locally
- Help each of our local groups to coach 25-35+ Readers annually
- Develop a quality assurance framework that will help groups to provide consistently excellent service
- Improve the efficiency of our systems and processes
- Strengthen our financial sustainability by diversifying income and carefully managing expenditure
- Strengthen our gathering of data and other evidence, to better understand and demonstrate the impact of our work, both nationally and locally
- Develop a clear communications plan to remove stigma and advertise our services
- Prepare to work with more organisations and amplify our advocacy



Letter from our Chair

Thank you for your interest in applying to be our Chair of Trustees.

In this pack, you will find information about who we are, the impact we make and the difference you could make as a trustee. There is also a formal role description, the format of which I am sure you will be familiar with.

What I want to do is get behind the formality and look at the why!

Our website provides background about our Board of Trustees, and we are incredibly lucky to be working with a talented and experienced CEO who leads a small, resolute team of employed staff.

Carla Priddon, our CEO, joined us three years ago, taking on the role after our founding CEO retired. During those three years an enormous amount has been achieved in terms of geographic growth and the number of adults who have benefitted from our well-established,

one-to-one, volunteer-led support model. We now have around ninety groups working across England, supported by two thousand volunteers.

Our diversified delivery model provides a wonderful insight into just how different the challenges are across a spectrum, ranging from city centre to rural town, where the need of the individual adult Reader is similar but putting in place the support needed is often less than straightforward.

- Our central team, while stretched by the growth of groups, has been very agile in adapting and looking for better systems of reporting and data capture
- We are trialling remote delivery, where possible, with hybrid coaching developed during Covid.
- Funding is a constant and interesting challenge met enthusiastically





So, why are we looking for a new Chair?

I have had the privilege of holding the Chair role during that period of transition from Founder to CEO, drawing upon my intimate knowledge as a long-term volunteer with Read Easy, as a group Team Leader and reading coach.

Along with the Board, I recognise that our new strategy will benefit from an incumbent with a different skill set to mine and who will be in place to see the work through, bringing a fresh approach and thinking to how we can achieve the greatest impact.

That may result from a broad and deep understanding of working with or for a national charity, or with a large, diversified volunteer base, along with an appreciation of how to attract new sources of funding.

You will already know how fulfilling the role of a Trustee is, and the step to Chair of the Board, whilst something of a challenge, is – and certainly has been for me – immensely rewarding.

Read Easy is a vibrant and progressive small charity with ambition and we are already making a difference. May I extend a warm invitation for you to contact me if you would like to discuss the role or the organisation further.

Paul Mugford
Chair of Trustees Read Easy (UK)

pm.trustee@readeasy.org.uk



Chair of Trustees Role

Challenge

At least 2.4 million adults in England can barely read or cannot read at all. This inhibits their access to work and further education. They struggle with road signs, household bills, menus, and letters from school. Many cannot read to their children or grandchildren – and the problem is getting worse.

Our Role

Read Easy UK is the only national organisation helping adults from all backgrounds to learn to read. We do this by providing them with free, confidential, one-to-one coaching by trained volunteers. This can help readers to grow in confidence and self-esteem, access other learning and qualifications, improve their employment chances, and play a fuller part in family and home life, their local communities and wider society. Look at our website to hear from some of the people we have helped – readeasy.org.uk/success-stories/.

We are a national charity with a core support team, regional staff, and an annual budget of c.£500,000. Thousands of adults have learned to read with us, hundreds more are learning right now and we are expanding rapidly.

Chair of Trustees

Overview

The Chair of Trustees provides strategic leadership and direction to the Board, ensuring the effective governance of the charity. In this role, you will guide the organisation in its mission to help adults learn to read, ensuring that it operates efficiently and sustainably while delivering a profound impact on individuals' lives.

You will lead the Board and work closely with the CEO to advance the charity's vision that every adult who wants to learn to read, can.

Key Responsibilities

Leadership and Governance:

- Lead the Board of Trustees in providing strategic oversight and effective governance, ensuring compliance with the charity's constitution, legal, and regulatory obligations
- Ensure the charity stays true to its mission of helping adults learn to read and that all activities align with its vision, values, and strategic objectives
- Foster a culture of collaboration, inclusion, and accountability within the Board

Board Management:

- Chair Trustee meetings, setting agendas in partnership with the CEO or senior staff to ensure discussions focus on the charity's priorities
- Encourage open, respectful debate and collective decision-making among Trustees, ensuring clarity of outcomes and actions
- Oversee the recruitment, induction, and development of Trustees, ensuring the Board is diverse, skilled, and effective in fulfilling its responsibilities



- Monitor and assess the performance of the Board, supporting Trustees to carry out their duties

Support to Senior Staff:

- Function as the primary link between the Board and the CEO, offering guidance, support, and constructive challenge
- Conduct regular appraisals and set objectives for the CEO, ensuring they have the resources and backing to succeed
- Serve as a sounding board for major decisions and initiatives, especially those that advance the charity's literacy goals

Advocacy and Representation:

- Function as an ambassador for the charity, promoting its work to external stakeholders, including funders, partners and the public
- Represent the charity at public events, campaigns, and meetings to raise awareness about adult literacy challenges and successes

Risk and Compliance:

- Ensure the charity has effective policies and systems for financial management, safeguarding and risk mitigation

- Oversee the preparation of statutory reports, ensuring compliance with the Charity Commission and other regulatory bodies

- Safeguard the charity's reputation and ensure its activities comply with all relevant laws and its governing documents

Strategic Planning:

- Collaborate with Trustees and staff to monitor progress against strategic goals, adapting plans as necessary to meet evolving challenges and opportunities

Person Specification, Chair of Trustees

Essential Skills and Attributes

- A strong passion for helping adults learn to read and a commitment to the charity's mission
- Experience as a Trustee
- Proven leadership experience in governance, strategy, or organisational management
- Excellent communication, interpersonal, and relationship-building skills
- Ability to lead, inspire, and manage a diverse group of Trustees and stakeholders





- Work with a passionate team of Trustees, staff, and volunteers to make a real and lasting difference in people's lives

- Experience in chairing meetings and fostering inclusive, productive discussions
- Knowledge of charity governance and the role of Trustees in the UK

Desirable Skills

- Experience in the education, literacy or non-profit sectors
- Experience of working with a large and dispersed team of volunteers
- A background in fundraising, advocacy, or financial oversight
- Established networks in philanthropy, education, or related fields

Time Commitment

- Attend five Board meetings a year, two in person and three on Teams. Ad hoc meetings as needed, both internal and external
- Attend one subcommittee (Governance or Strategy) meeting five times per year (Teams/ Zoom) and occasional meetings for key projects as required
- Average time commitment equates to around 2 – 3 days per month

Benefits for you

- Lead a transformative organisation dedicated to improving adult literacy and creating lifelong opportunities

To Apply

We welcome applications from anyone who is interested in furthering our work, and we strive to ensure that our recruitment practices are fair, open, easy to access and as inclusive as possible.

Our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Group is actively promoting and advancing diversity and inclusion, ensuring a culture where everyone can be themselves and thrive. We welcome you to apply and be your authentic self.

The skills and experience of our existing trustees can be found here on our website: readeasy.org.uk/about-us/our-trustees/

Applications should be sent to our Chair, Paul Mugford, at pm.trustee@readeasy.org.uk

In addition, if you would like to know more about Read Easy, Carla Priddon, our CEO, will be very happy to give you some time Carla@readeasy.org.uk

Please do not hesitate to contact Paul if you need any support in the application process. The deadline for applications is **3rd March 2025** and shortlisted candidates will be interviewed between 10th and 12th of March.



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readeasy.org.uk

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