

Coordinator Role Description

Thank you for considering becoming a Read Easy Coordinator.

Read Easy is a volunteer organisation that recruits and trains volunteers to teach adults with low reading skills to read, on a one-to-one basis using a phonics-based coaching manual. By helping people to tackle their reading difficulties, it is hoped that they will also grow in confidence and self-esteem, become more independent, move on to other forms of education and improve their employment opportunities.

Read Easy is run by volunteers, and the role of Coordinator is also a voluntary one, but it brings its own rewards; in return for giving your time and expertise, you will have the opportunity to help change lives.

Role description

Detailed guidance on what the role involves will be provided in the Coordinator's Handbook and during training. However, the role can be divided into three main areas:

1) Recruitment of volunteer Coaches and 'new Readers'

- The Coordinator will receive calls from potential volunteers; send out application forms; interview them with the help of one of the Management Team members; book them onto training; keep a list of those who have been trained; and match them with new Readers as they come forward. It is hoped that the Coordinator will also attend training sessions for new Coaches as they occur.
- He or she will also receive calls from potential Readers (or those who wish to refer them), enrol them informally (including completing a simple initial reading test and assessment questionnaire) and match them to volunteer Coaches in their area.
- This part of the role will need the Coordinator to have good organisational and computer skills, good people and communication skills and to be very aware of and sensitive to the various needs and difficulties of those who come forward wanting to learn to read.

2) Support

- Once a volunteer Coach has been paired with a new Reader, the Coordinator will be responsible for visiting one of their reading sessions a few weeks after they have begun coaching, in order to observe and offer support and guidance, as necessary. Thereafter, Coaches will be invited to telephone for support or advice if they need it, and the Coordinator will be expected to maintain regular telephone and email contact to check all is going well and visit occasionally or as necessary.
- At the end of each term, all Coaches will be invited to a Coach Meeting to feedback and discuss their experiences and receive further support. These meetings will be run jointly by the Coordinator and the Management Team and can also be used for providing extra training.



- On completion of the course, the Coordinator will carry out a final interview with the Reader and complete a final assessment questionnaire.
- This part of the role, in addition to the qualities mentioned above, will require someone who has good literacy skills, so that he or she will be confident to guide others as necessary. Acquiring thorough familiarity with the *Turning Pages manuals* will be essential. Some literacy teaching experience, particularly in the use of phonics, would be useful. The role also requires someone who can work well in teams.

3) Record keeping

- The role of Coordinator will also include keeping records about Coaches and Readers from their application forms, and the ongoing records of their reading arrangements and Coach Monitoring Sessions. All information must be stored in accordance with the Data Protection Policy.
- The Coordinator will also be expected to keep receipts and a simple record of expenses to present to the Management Team on a regular basis.
- This part of the role requires good organisational skills, self-management skills and the ability to use a computer will be essential.

Recruitment of Coordinator

Prospective Coordinators will be asked to discuss the role informally with someone from the Management Team and then:

- complete an application form
- provide 2 references
- be interviewed by the Management Team and a Read Easy UK's Regional Adviser

Training

Relevant training and induction will be provided. Read Easy UK's Regional Adviser will also be available to provide on-going telephone and email support, and visit when necessary, to help the Coordinator undertake the role successfully.

In addition, attending the one-day Initial Training and Consolidation Training sessions for Reading Coaches will help you understand exactly how the scheme is supposed to operate from the Coaches' point of view. Initial Training will introduce the issues surrounding adults who struggle to read, how to use the *Turning Pages* manuals, how to establish an appropriate relationship with new Readers and guidance in working in a one-to-one situation.

Consolidation Training, which Coaches attend a few months after they start coaching, provides extra guidance on other activities and resources that Coaches can use to help consolidate their Readers' learning. (You may, if you wish and time allows, choose to take on a new Reader yourself, if an opportunity becomes available, so that you can gain an insight into the role of a Reading Coach.)

Oversight

The Management Team is responsible for ensuring that the Coordinator operates appropriately and within Read Easy guidelines, and for this reason the Coordinator cannot be a member of the Management Team or vote on Management Team decisions.



Nonetheless, the Coordinator obviously plays a pivotal role in the running of the group and needs to report regularly to the Management Team on the progress of the project, and to seek guidance and agreement on how to deal with any issues that arise where no standard approach has previously been agreed. As a general rule, therefore, the Coordinator will be invited to attend most, if not all, Management Team meetings, unless there is a particular reason for not doing so, and some written reports will also be required.

In addition, it is recommended that one Team member has delegated responsibility to meet regularly with the Coordinator to provide practical support where necessary and to monitor the progress of the project.

Time commitment

The Coordinator will be expected to work from home and should expect this role to involve anything from one to three days a week of their time, or the equivalent. Experience suggests that most Coordinators can manage around 6-8 reading pairs for each day they have available for volunteering, although most work their volunteering hours fairly flexibly across the working week.

The most important thing is that the role is carried out effectively and that Readers and Coaches are properly supported. The role of Coordinator can be a genuinely rewarding and enjoyable one, but anyone considering taking it on needs to be aware that it can also prove time-consuming.

A note about the coaching manuals

Turning Pages is a phonics-based reading programme and is central to the operation of most Read Easy groups. It is designed so that anyone who can read fluently can teach someone else and no previous training or qualifications are required. Our one-day training session gives volunteers a good introduction to the *Turning Pages* programme and how to use the phonics approach, but every page of the manuals also provides the Reading Coach with clear instructions.

It is important to be clear from the outset that this is our main tool and that we are not in a position to train or organise people to use any other method of teaching reading, although we are keen to encourage the use of supplementary resources and other activities to support the programme. If you feel that this phonics-based approach is not for you, please do be honest and say so.

Holidays

Read Easy UK recommends that local groups operate roughly around school terms, to allow the Coordinator, Coaches and Readers some time off. It will be appreciated if the Coordinator is able to give the Management Team good notice of holiday arrangements, so that someone else can arrange to provide cover.

Expenses

Read Easy will cover the Coordinator's expenses and running costs for carrying out the role. The detail of what will be covered will be agreed with the Management Team, but will include travel expenses, office and telephone expenses. The Coordinator will be expected to keep up-to-date records of expenses and to provide the Management Team Leader and Treasurer with completed expenses claim forms, along with receipts and invoices, on a regular basis.



Person qualities and expertise looked for:

Personal qualities:

- Commitment to helping others to achieve their goals;
- Ability to get people to work together effectively;;
- Self awareness and personal responsibility: knowing and managing your own strengths and weaknesses, and able to maintain a professional approach;
- Ability to plan and organise, set realistic targets for work and manage time effectively
- Commitment to equality and diversity – valuing differences in gender, culture, opinions, values, ideas, skills and experiences.
- Commitment to maintaining confidentiality;
- Being an active listener and clear communicator;

Expertise & experience:

The Coordinator should have experience and knowledge in three or more of the following areas:

- Volunteer management
- Administration
- Computer skills – this is essential
- Supervision of others
- Some experience of teaching literacy
- Working as part of a team
- Strong written and spoken communication skills