



## Reading Friend Volunteer Library Service

### Purpose of the role:

Reading Friends is a UK-wide reading befriending programme, which aims to use books and reading to help combat loneliness and social isolation. Reading Friends can use books, magazines, newspapers, comics, poems or anything else to start conversations and connect with people who are experiencing loneliness. During the COVID pandemic, these conversations will take place one-to-one via phone calls. Post COVID, we hope to be able to offer Reading Friends groups in libraries as well.

### Main tasks and activities may include:

- Plan the sessions/conversations in advance, using the resources available and your knowledge of the person you are befriending/group you are running;
- Prepare any materials needed for the activity;
- Create a welcoming and open environment;
- Facilitate the conversation, either one-to-one or in a group environment.

### Volunteers will have these qualities, skills and experiences:

You do not need to have any previous experience of volunteering or working in a library. For this role you will need:

- An interest in libraries and desire to be an advocate for the service;
- An interest in and an enthusiasm for libraries and reading;
- To enjoy meeting people and talking to them, either one-to-one over the phone, or to multiple people in a group setting;
- Good communication skills;
- To be organised and motivated;
- To be able to work as part of a team but also to use your own initiative;
- To be reliable

### Types of training and resources available to support volunteers:

- An Induction which explains how the library service operates and outlines all the policies and procedures that you will need to know;
- Details of all the relevant resources to help you carry out your role;
- All Reading Friends will be asked to watch a series of five videos, created by The Reading Agency: 'What is Reading Friends?'; 'The Role of a Reading

Befriender'; 'How Reading Befrienders get Everyone Involved'; 'What Happens Next?'; and 'Reading Friends – Distance Befriending, Good Practice'.

- A tour of the library at which you will be volunteering (as and when face-to-face group sessions can be started);
- Introductions to members of staff and other volunteers, alongside whom you will be volunteering;
- Autism Friendly Libraries training;
- Dementia Friends training;
- Out of pocket expenses can be paid;
- Accreditation may also be available.

You will be asked to carry out some of this training independently, before attending a training session. We will provide guidance and links to resources.

## How often does the volunteer activity tend to take place?

Telephone befrienders make their own arrangements for calls to customers so you can fit your volunteering around your other commitments. All calls must be pre-arranged.

Arrangements for group sessions will made between libraries and volunteers, at such times as face-to-face activities are again possible.

## Where does the voluntary activity take place?

Telephone befriending will take place from the volunteer's home.

We hope any future group sessions will take place at a number of North Somerset Libraries. Please see the Vacancies page of our website for more information: [www.northsomersetlibraryvolunteers.wordpress.com](http://www.northsomersetlibraryvolunteers.wordpress.com) or call using the details below.

## Name and contact details of the volunteer co-ordinator:

Name: The Library Volunteering Team

Email: [library.volunteers@n-somerset.gov.uk](mailto:library.volunteers@n-somerset.gov.uk)

Phone numbers: 01934 426 657 or 01275 884 315 or 01275 888 864

## Other important information:

- If you are concerned that volunteering may affect any benefits you receive, please ask and we will do our best to assist you.
- We do not need to see a DBS certificate for this role; however, we require two references.

- All library volunteering roles involve dealing with the public and are customer focused.
- Volunteers are complementary to paid workers and volunteers should not be used to replace staff.

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