

Thurrock Council volunteer role description

Reading Friends volunteer

Supported by	Reading Friends Coordinator
Role summary	Reading Friends brings people together to read, share stories, meet new friends and have fun. We use reading – books, magazines, newspapers or anything else – to start everyone chatting. Volunteers meet with participants, one-to-one or in a group, to use reading as a way of sparking conversations. Role options include Virtual Group Facilitator, Phone Befriender or Physical Group Facilitator in community hubs and libraries
Location	Online or at various libraries within Thurrock.
How to apply	Complete the application form at www.thurrock.gov.uk/volunteering-vacancies

Tasks and responsibilities

For reading groups, you will be expected to:

- lead group reading activities and facilitate conversation using reading materials as a basis for discussion
- make practical arrangements to identify and select suitable materials – books, newspapers, handling objects – that focus on the group's interest
- prepare other resources– chairs, tea, coffee – in advance of each session, as necessary
- be aware of – and sensitive to – the needs of those in the group
- make sure everyone is able to contribute to the session and feels welcomed and involved
- lead on various themed activities – for example, memory boxes
- help to clean and tidy-up following sessions

For home visits, you will be expected to:

- make practical arrangements to identify and select suitable materials which focus on the Reading Friend's interests – for example, books or newspapers
- visit the Reading Friend in their own home on a regular basis
- provide companionship and conversation using reading materials as a basis for discussion
- maintain appropriate boundaries

For both types of activity, you will be expected to:

- take part in regular supervision meetings
- contribute to the evaluation of the project, as required
- feedback any issues or concerns to the Project Coordinator

Skills and experience

You must:

- have a friendly and approachable manner
- have good communication and listening skills, with an ability to build rapport through conversation

- be patient, with a sensitive approach and the ability to empathise with people
- be reliable and trustworthy
- have a love of reading and the desire to share this with others
- have the confidence to read to others
- have the ability to maintain a meaningful conversation for a prolonged period in the Reading Friend's first language
- have an understanding of the need for confidentiality
- be able to cope with the duties and responsibilities of the role and its environment
- have an understanding of health and safety and safeguarding (training will be provided)
- be able to deal with an emergency calmly
- be able to follow guidelines/instructions
- show initiative and the ability to work without supervision
- be willing to acquire new knowledge and skills

Time commitment

1 hour a week and 1 hour preparation time.

Support you will get

We will:

- provide induction training
- provide safeguarding training
- provide regular supervision sessions for ongoing support and development
- reimburse out-of-pocket expenses, up to agreed limits, upon production of receipts

This role requires a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.