

TRUSTEE INFORMATION PACK

Why join the Chapter One Board?

Like all good books,
with Chapter One,
the best is yet to
come.

At Chapter One, we want to create a world where all children have the literacy skills needed to thrive. That's why we want to bring one-to-one reading support to children from less advantaged communities at the time they need it most. It's the combination of technology our programmes use, and the personal, human connection between a caring adult and a child that we enable, that sets us apart.

It's an exciting time to join us and help shape our future direction. We have grown rapidly since our inception in 2018 and are already making a difference to the lives of nearly 3,000 disadvantaged, struggling young readers in England and Scotland. We are keen to expand the diversity of thought and experience on our Board to help Chapter One ensure that its proven, scalable solutions can help thousands of children create the "first chapter" of their own success story. Like all good books, with Chapter One, the best is yet to come.

Why does Chapter One exist?

THE READING GAP

40%

38% of 11 year-olds in England from disadvantaged backgrounds (around 80,000 children) leave primary school each year unable to read to the expected standard (DfE, 2023)

43%

43% of English adults can't read well enough to understand basic health information (NHS)

x3

Three times as many 6- to 7-year-olds are now very low attaining readers than before Covid (NFER, Nov 2022)

7 million adults in the UK struggle with literacy

7 million adults in the UK struggle with literacy and this costs the UK around £80 billion each year (World Literacy Foundation 2018), which equates to 3.6% of GDP. In 2023 40% of 11-year-olds from disadvantaged backgrounds in England left primary school each year not reading to the expected standard. The disruption to schooling caused by the pandemic was devastating for these children. A November 2022 study by the National Foundation for Educational Research found that three times as many 6- to 7-year-olds are now very low-attaining readers than before Covid.

Schools devote significant time and resources to ensuring that children read fluently in their early primary years, actively encouraging parents to read aloud with their children to develop and cement literacy and oral skills. However, many disadvantaged children don't regularly read with adults in their homes, and schools were already struggling before the pandemic to find the numbers of reading volunteers they needed to support the efforts of overstretched teachers.

At Chapter One we believe that the ability to read is the fundamental skill that underpins every child's future educational attainment and helps them to fulfil their potential, to contribute to their community and ultimately to gain employment. Our online reading volunteer programme, which uses a unique, online platform to pair corporate volunteers with children in need of reading support, has been proven to improve the reading enjoyment, ability and confidence of young children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We are also an organisation that is about innovation and development. We work closely with our sister organisations in the US and Canada, learning from what works in their environments and adapting it to the UK setting. We're piloting a phonics intervention in several schools and are keen to develop our capacity for to innovate and experiment with new ideas and models.

£80 BILLION

£80 billion (3.6% GDP) is the annual cost of illiteracy to the UK economy (World Literacy Foundation)

1 IN 8

1 in 8 of the nation's disadvantaged children don't own a single book



About Chapter One UK

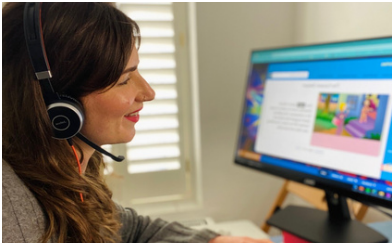
Chapter One (U.K.) Ltd is a registered charity established in 2018 as Innovations for Learning. In February 2023, the organisation rebranded and renamed to Chapter One. Chapter One's governing document defines its charitable objects as 'to advance education for the benefit of the public in particular (but without limitation) in the field of literacy'. Please see Appendix 1 for an extract from the 2021 - 24 strategic plan. Our plan for 2025-2029 is in development.

We currently support children attending schools serving disadvantaged communities in Bradford/Leeds, Doncaster, East Sussex, Edinburgh, Glasgow, London, Manchester, Middlesbrough, Peterborough and West Cumbria. We are expanding to Birmingham in 2024-25.



How online volunteer reading works

For the whole academic year, corporate volunteers are paired with 5- to 7- year-old pupils who need additional reading support.



The pair enjoy a weekly 30-minute reading session online via the secure, bespoke, Chapter One reading platform.



All our stories and literacy activities are fun and engaging, and focus on fluency, comprehension and expanding vocabulary.



Our online reading volunteers come from our partner businesses who sponsor and recruit their employees as readers. Volunteers use a sophisticated internet platform and a voice connection to link - from their workplace or home - to a dedicated classroom laptop for weekly reading sessions with selected pupils.

Since its launch in 2018 Chapter One's online reading volunteer programme has achieved an impressive rate of growth.

We have:

- increased the number of children we are able to support with critical reading practice (from 380 in the academic year 2018-19 to nearly 3000 in 2023-24)
- established the programme in ten geographical areas – Bradford/Leeds, Doncaster, Edinburgh, Glasgow, East Sussex, London, Manchester, Middlesbrough, Peterborough and West Cumbria
- increased the number of corporate partners who support us financially and with volunteers:
- expanded the age range of the children we support (now including Year 2 and 3)

For 2023-24 we have 130+ corporate partners, a partner retention rate of 89%, and a volunteer growth rate of almost 40% since last year.



Chapter One's programme offers a flexible, time-efficient online volunteering opportunity for busy professionals who want to make a direct impact on the lives of disadvantaged children.



See this short video for an introduction to our work at <http://tiny.cc/yu24vz>.

You can also scan the code to watch the video.



Our evaluation and impact

We're committed to robust impact evaluation of our work and have commissioned external evaluators to measure our outcomes in relation to reading confidence, attainment and motivation. Read our latest impact report - for our work in 2022-23 - [here](#).

Our [short videos](#) are a useful introduction to how our reading programme works in practice. More information and latest news is available at chapterone.org and on our [X \(Twitter\)](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

Our relationship with Chapter One United States and Canada

Chapter One UK is financially independent of Chapter One US and Chapter One Canada. The three organisations collaborate on specific projects, such as the recent rebrand, and the software platform is licensed from Chapter One US. The governing document of Chapter One UK stipulates that its sole member is Chapter One US, and Seth Weinberger, the President and Founder, is the Chair of the Chapter One UK Board.

Chapter One's governance structure

Chapter One is currently governed by [a board of eight trustees](#). We are actively recruiting new board members. As described above, Chapter One is constituted as a membership organisation, and the company law member of the charity is Chapter One US. The board's chair is Seth Weinberger, the President of Chapter One US. Alex Green is our vice-chair.



Chapter One's current funding strategy

To generate the funding required to sustain its operations, Chapter One asks its corporate partners to make a financial contribution, on a per team/class basis, as well as fielding employees as volunteers. Schools receive the first year of the programme for free, and then contribute a small amount per participating class, capped at £1,000 per school.

The organisation's latest audited accounts can be found [here](#). Approximately 75% of income is generated from corporate partners, 4% comes from school contributions and 21% from additional external fundraising from trusts and foundations.

The charity has developed a financial growth plan which underpins its strategic objectives. As a relatively new UK charity the organisation also needs to build up reserves. We are and accredited Real Living Wage Employer and are also registered with the Fundraising Regulator.



READY TO HELP CLOSE THE LITERACY GAP?



Trustee application, selection and induction

We currently have trustee vacancies to fill and are operating a rolling recruitment process. We have two priority recruitment areas - Education and Digital - and we have developed specific role descriptions, below.


Prospective trustees are invited to submit a current CV and covering letter to rebecca.yeadon@chapterone.org. Following consideration of the statement and CV alongside the priority recruitment areas, we will invite selected candidates to have an informal discussion with the CEO, Emma Bell, followed by an initial interview with Board members. There may be more than one round of interviews.

Successful new trustees will be offered an existing Board colleague as a mentor for the first 3-6 months.

Chapter One Trustee Role Description

Being a trustee of Chapter One will require you to:

- Work with fellow trustees to shape, drive and monitor Chapter One's strategy
- Prepare for and participate fully in board meetings, including occasional joint meetings with the US and Canadian Boards
- Act reasonably in decision making and leadership of the organisation
- Support Chapter One's CEO and leadership team
- Ensure the proper governance, management and administration of the charity
- Monitor, manage and mitigate risks with a considered, proportionate and balanced approach
- Use any specific skills, knowledge or experience you have to help the board of trustees reach quick and sound decision by leading discussions, focusing on key issues, providing advice and guidance on new initiatives, or other issues in which the trustee has expertise
- Promote the work of Chapter One externally
- Participate in sub-committees, if required



A guide to **what is involved** in being a charity trustee, and the **statutory duties** of the role can be found [here](#).

Priority skills and experience for the Chapter One Board - 2024



Our Board skills audit has identified gaps in skills, experience or knowledge in the following areas:

- Education, especially KS1 and KS2
- Digital/Technology

We're therefore looking for trustees with the following skills, experience and attributes:

Education

- Senior leader experience in a primary setting, ideally as English/literacy lead for KS1 or KS2
- Understanding of the strategies used to strengthen early literacy instruction, including reading for pleasure and phonics
- A willingness to be the 'education expert' on the Board
- Ability to advise Chapter One on how to position our offer to schools
- Willingness to help Chapter One identify communities, schools and leaders who could benefit from our programmes
- Understanding of how MATs or local authority school improvement teams approach relationships with external providers, to allow us to diversify our partnerships

Digital/Technology

- Experience in helping organisations with digital transformation and innovation
- Ability to horizon scan wider digital trends and understand and assess their impact on Chapter One
- Willingness to fully understand and challenge the scale of the charity's digital ambition
- Ability to creatively solve for how to digitally improve the volunteer and child experience
- Ability to provide thought leadership on the role of digital within Chapter One
- Ability to empower the board to understand digital and help them to consider the role of digital across the organisation
- Willingness to leverage and draw on own networks to support our work

Trustee person specification

Essential

- Is committed to the organisation and has sufficient time and willingness to contribute effectively to board proceedings
- Is willing to adhere to the Chapter One Trustee Code of Conduct
- Has experience and an understanding of strategy development
- Has good, independent judgement and is willing to speak up
- Has a reasonable understanding of the legal, financial, audit and other regulatory requirements of a charity
- Is able to make quick and sound decisions based on an analysis of information presented to them
- Has a passion for literacy and improving outcomes for disadvantaged children
- Is aware of developments in the voluntary sector and areas of interest to Chapter One
- Can manage risks with a balanced and informed approach
- Is able to work effectively as a member of a team
- Wholeheartedly embraces, and is able to demonstrate, the organisational values as outlined in our strategic plan (Appendix 1)
- Is committed to the Nolan principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity accountability, openness, honesty and leadership

Trustee values and mindset

As described above, we expect our trustees to help set the organisation's strategic direction and to wholeheartedly endorse our core values:

- We believe in the potential of all children
- We are innovative, ambitious, optimistic and energetic
- We seek to fuse the power of technology with the power of human connection
- We believe in continuous evaluation and improvement

However, while we need your guidance and strategic input, and there may be times when we also ask you to be a bit more hands on, so come prepared!

Trustee diversity

The Chapter One board is intentional and purposeful about broadening the diversity of thought, perspectives and lived experience among the trustees. We particularly welcome applications from candidates of colour.

Trustee commitment and location

Board meetings are held 4-5 times a year, usually by video call, for 2 hours, in the afternoon/evenings. Once a year the Board meets in person in London for a longer meeting. Candidates can be physically based anywhere in the UK. Meetings may sometimes include colleagues from the Boards of Chapter One in the US and Canada.

Committee meetings will take additional time. Outside of board and committee meetings, staff may seek to consult with trustees on particular subjects and there will be opportunities to attend project visits, meetings and events.

The average trustee time commitment, including Board and committee meetings, reading, project meetings/work will be 6 hours per month.

Trustees are appointed for a three-year term and can serve a maximum of three terms (maximum of nine years). Each member serves at the pleasure of the chair, apart from the chair who can serve a third term (maximum of twelve years). The role is unpaid, however reasonable expenses are paid.



it all starts with literacy

IT ALL STARTS WITH LITERACY



- Support 3,000 children per year in up to 8 geographical areas of disadvantage in England to improve their literacy outcomes
- Consolidate and expand our corporate partnerships and increase volunteer numbers by at least 55% year-on-year
- Diversify our income to ensure growth is sustainable and creates a foundation for scalability
- Expand our volunteer in-school model to children at home and/or to include intensive support from trained phonics specialists
- Focus on continually improving the experience of the volunteers, teachers and children who use our programmes