

# VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT TOOLKIT



As a Chapter One Volunteer Coordinator, your first step is to promote our **Online Reading Volunteers Programme** among your employees and get them excited about signing up!

In your communications, don't forget to emphasise to potential volunteers that Chapter One requires **a weekly, 30-minute commitment** to read with the same child from autumn to July (an entire academic year). Our session scheduling platform does give the flexibility to change a session time should your volunteers have a conflict or are not able to make a reading session on a particular day, but it is important that they are aware that it is a sustained, weekly commitment.

To help you, we have put together a volunteer recruitment toolkit, which is split into two parts - **guides and resources for our Volunteer Coordinators** and **resources for you to excite your employees**.

## Meet the team!



Emma Bilborough  
Corporate Partnerships Officer  
[emma.bilborough@chapterone.org](mailto:emma.bilborough@chapterone.org)



Anna Ansted  
Corporate Partnerships Manager  
[anna.ansted@chapterone.org](mailto:anna.ansted@chapterone.org)

For any questions on any of the information in this toolkit, contact **Emma Bilborough** in the first instance, then **Anna Ansted**.

For any **DBS/PVG** questions, please contact our friendly **Chapter One Support Team** at [uksupport@chapterone.org](mailto:uksupport@chapterone.org)

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# RECRUITMENT TIPS AND RESOURCES FOR VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS

We have **put together a series of useful resources** that you can share with your staff to help explain the need for Chapter One as well as the benefits of participating in the programme for both young readers and volunteers.

**In a nutshell, volunteering with the Chapter One Online Reading Volunteers Programme is:**

- **Time-efficient** – only 30 minutes a week
- **Flexible** – volunteer from anywhere
- **Simple** – online platform to guide volunteers
- **Rewarding** – make a big difference to a child's life



We encourage you to think creatively about how you use these resources and other ways you might encourage support and signups for the Chapter One programme, in turn boosting awareness and buy-in to your organisation's ESG, social value or CSR mission.

**Here are a few ideas to get you started. Please reach out to us for any help!**

- **Send out our template email** with links to a Chapter One flyer, video, case studies and volunteer testimonials.
- **Ask a senior internal person to host a lunchtime talk or presentation about Chapter One** - this could be from a CSR perspective and/or focus on the role of volunteering in employee wellbeing and good mental health.
- **Ask the Chapter One team to present at an 'all hands' meeting**, or set up a special Chapter One information call.
- **Collaborate with other company channels and resources** - what about team leader shoutouts? Can you get the HR or internal comms teams to support you?
- **Run a recruitment campaign over 3 weeks**, with a competition between departments for who can sign up most employees.
- **Use your social media channels to make a splash about Chapter One and to tell volunteer stories.** We have put together **a communications toolkit** to support and inspire you.

## Follow us on social media!

**LinkedIn:** [chapteroneuk](#) / [Subscribe to our LinkedIn newsletter](#)

**Twitter:** [@chapterone\\_uk](#)

**Instagram:** [@chapterone\\_uk](#)

**Facebook:** [ukchapterone](#)

[chapterone.org](#)



# TIMETABLE AND WHAT VOLUNTEER COORDINATORS SHOULD EXPECT FROM CHAPTER ONE

Here's what you can expect from us throughout the Chapter One year.

**MAY-EARLY  
JULY**

## **The call out for volunteers**

This is when most of our partners begin to recruit volunteers for the coming school year. We provide you with a **recruitment toolkit** to share with your colleagues giving a full overview of the our Online Reading Volunteers Programme. **Returning partner?** You may decide to wait until registration opens in July, to invite your volunteers to sign up directly with us.

**FROM MID-JULY**

## **Get your teams registered and trained**

We provide you with the details of how your volunteers can register on the Chapter One platform. Now will be the time to advise your colleagues to register as soon as possible so that we can move forward with DBS checks. As part of the registration process, volunteers will sign up for training webinars which start in September.

**AUGUST ONWARDS**

## **Helping you keep track**

When your volunteers begin registration we provide weekly status reports so you can see who has received DBS clearance, completed their training and is ready to be matched with a child. A further report will then detail who has been matched and can start reading! You will also be able to monitor this through your Volunteer Coordinator account on the Chapter One dashboard.

**LATE SEPTEMBER -  
EARLY NOVEMBER**

## **Weekly reading sessions begin!**

We provide you with progress reports but again you will be able to log on to the dashboard as a Volunteer Coordinator to see the performance of your volunteers.

**NOVEMBER-  
JANUARY AND  
JUNE/JULY**

## **Meet and Greet and end-of-school year reading celebrations**

We arrange virtual Meet and Greet events around Christmas time so that volunteers and children can see each other and connect outside a reading session. Where geographically feasible, our joyous end-of-year celebrations are in-person visits to the school.

**JUNE/JULY**

## **Partner, Volunteer and School Recognition Awards**

We host our annual Partner, Volunteer and School Recognition event. This is a celebration of our volunteers' individual and collective achievements, an opportunity to hear from and celebrate our school partners and teachers, and the presentation of some awards.

## What contact will you have with the Chapter One team?

We highly value our Volunteer Coordinators and our friendly team is always on hand to help. Please email our Corporate Partnerships Officer, **Emma Bilsborough** at [emma.bilsborough@chapterone.org](mailto:emma.bilsborough@chapterone.org) or our Corporate Partnerships Manager, **Anna Ansted**, [anna.ansted@chapterone.org](mailto:anna.ansted@chapterone.org) if you have any questions or issues you'd like to discuss.

On a day-to-day basis, our Corporate Partnerships team and live volunteer/technical support team are always available if you have questions or problems. Although we are a small team with limited capacity, we are really keen to have ongoing dialogue with partners to discuss collaborations, community building and fundraising ideas.

The frequency of meetings between Chapter One and the Volunteer Coordinator depends on the size of a partner's volunteer team:

- Teams of 10-29 volunteers are offered a progress meeting mid-year plus an optional end of year meeting
- Teams of 30+ are offered a quarterly meeting.
- Teams of 50+ are offered monthly meetings.

## Meet the team!



**Emma Bilsborough**  
Corporate Partnerships Officer  
[emma.bilsborough@chapterone.org](mailto:emma.bilsborough@chapterone.org)



**Anna Ansted**  
Corporate Partnerships Manager  
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For any **DBS/PVG questions**, please contact our friendly **Chapter One Support Team** at [uksupport@chapterone.org](mailto:uksupport@chapterone.org)

# LUNCH AND LEARN



**Interested in being an online reading volunteer with Chapter One?** Find out more about the programme at a 'lunch and learn' session!

**Emma Bilsborough**, Corporate Partnerships Officer and **Anna Ansted**, Corporate Partnerships Manager, will be running 'lunch and learn' sessions:

- Every Tuesday **12-12.30pm** from 18 June until 1 October
- On the last Thursday of the month **12-12.30pm** from end of June until the end of September

They will give an overview of the programme and volunteer commitment, a demonstration of the reading platform and answer any questions.



**Emma Bilsborough**  
Corporate Partnerships Officer



**Anna Ansted**  
Corporate Partnerships Manager

## How to join:

Every Tuesday (from 18 June - 1 October, 12-12:30pm): <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88657692587>

Last Thursday of every month (June - September): <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85772627154>

**Note:** the sessions are 30 minutes long with some extra time at the end for you to ask questions - no need to stay for the full 45 minutes unless you want to!

# THE READING GAP



## 40%

40% of 11 year-olds in England from disadvantaged backgrounds leave primary school 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)

## 1 IN 5

1 in 5 children aged 5-8 don't own a single book (National Literacy Trust, 2022)

## x3

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

## £80BN

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

## 84%

84% of teachers have felt at a loss at times about how to help a struggling reader (GL Assessment & Renaissance Learning, 2024)

## 1 IN 3

1 in 3 children in every class can't keep up with lessons because of reading ability (GL Assessment & Renaissance Learning, 2024)

## 31%

31% of children under 7 do not experience regular reading with multiple people (BookTrust 2023)

## 32%

32% of schools have reduced teaching staff, impacting the quality of education provided to pupils (Sutton Trust, 2024)

**Learning to read is not just about succeeding in school, it's about succeeding in life.** Take a moment to imagine what your own life would be like if you couldn't read food labels, road signs, the text messages on your phone. Scary, isn't it?

We develop **fundamental reading skills** and **inspire a love for reading** from an early age, helping **to build confidence** in children who might otherwise slip through the cracks. We know that giving children **the right support, at the right time**, can transform their futures – no matter their circumstances today.





# Chapter One

# ONLINE READING VOLUNTEERS

It all starts with literacy

# 40%

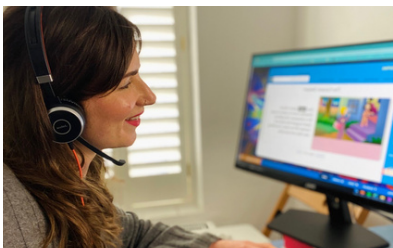
of 11-year-olds from disadvantaged backgrounds leave primary school unable to read at the expected standard.

(Department for Education, 2023)

Chapter One online reading volunteers give children **one-to-one reading support** at the time they need it most. **Are you ready to help close the reading gap?**

## How **online volunteer reading** works

For the whole academic year, corporate volunteers are paired with 5- to 8- 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.



Chapter One offers a flexible, time-efficient online volunteering opportunity for busy professionals who want to make a direct impact on the lives of children facing disadvantage. **Contact your Volunteer Coordinator to sign up!**

Scan the QR code to watch a video with more information about volunteering with Chapter One.





# WHAT OUR TEACHERS SAY

Click on the names of our teachers below to find out what they have to say about their experience of Chapter One.



**Eddi Miller, Assistant Headteacher, Harbinger Primary School, Tower Hamlets**



**Melissa Allen, teacher, Globe Primary School, Tower Hamlets**



**Lydia Girdham, teacher, Globe Primary School, Tower Hamlets**



**Olga Down, teacher, Sacred Heart Primary School, Middlesbrough**

**JUDITH DOZIO, TEACHER,  
THE WILLOW PRIMARY SCHOOL,  
HARINGEY, LONDON**

Chapter One has given our pupils opportunities to be enthusiastic about reading! We have seen progress in pupils' confidence, fluency and understanding. They are always excited for their weekly calls and the volunteers are incredibly supportive.



**LEANNE SAVAGE, TEACHER,  
DISTINGTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL,  
WEST CUMBRIA**

A huge thank you for providing us with a seamless intervention which runs as a huge success across our school. The one-to-one reading support that your volunteers provide to our children is like gold dust!

**CATHY HARROP, TEACHER,  
CASTLE ACADEMY, DONCASTER**

The children really love it. They come in first thing in the morning excited for their sessions. Although they are shy when meeting over Zoom they have built great relationships with the volunteers, you can hear the confidence when they read together.

**FLORENCE ROBERTSON, TEACHER,  
CHYNGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL,  
EAST SUSSEX**

Chapter One has provided our children with targeted reading sessions, tailored to their abilities and interests that have improved their confidence and love for reading. Our children have made huge progress and we are thrilled with the results.

**LEZIEL THOMAS, TEACHER,  
MARYLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL,  
NEWHAM, LONDON**

All pupils on the list have made fantastic progress on their reading assessment recently. Their confidence has grown tremendously and I really want to say thank you with a grateful heart. It has made my job so much easier.

# WHAT OUR VOLUNTEERS SAY

**ALISON WALKER, VOLUNTEER,  
DELOITTE**

Best 30 mins of my week, no contest. Topics my little reader and I discussed last year: Pets (her rabbits, my cats), paleontology (new favourite word), the Great Fire of London (what did London look like then and now), ice cream and sprinkles (a lot, all the time please), the solar system (favourite planet: hers: Jupiter, mine: Neptune), Greek mythology (cool), gymnastics (super cool). We did actually do some reading too!

**OLIVER BULLOCK, VOLUNTEER,  
SAGE**

I would highly recommend being a reading buddy. I wasn't sure what to expect initially and was a little bit nervous about it. I completed the training and I gave it a go. I'm on my second year - it is absolutely amazing how much progress the students I have had the privilege to listen to have made. The online system that is used to schedule a session is super easy to use and allows you to choose a time that suits your calendar... I cannot recommend this enough.

**YANA MALEM, VOLUNTEER,  
JACOBS**

That feeling you get from knowing you're helping that child reach their potential and seeing how much they value the one-on-one time with an adult to practise and learn is immeasurable. You also feel your own sense of achievement and pride as the sessions progress and you witness their abilities improving week-on-week.

**DAVID FORBES, VOLUNTEER,  
SODEXO STOP HUNGER FOUNDATION**

Spending 30 minutes reading with a child every week is great. not only do you switch off from emails, but you get to enthuse a child through words, helping shape their future from a young age. you forget as your own kids grow up, just how quickly they soak up information and develop. couldn't think of a better way to start my Thursdays.

**STEWART JONES, VOLUNTEER,  
HEIDELBERG MATERIALS UK**

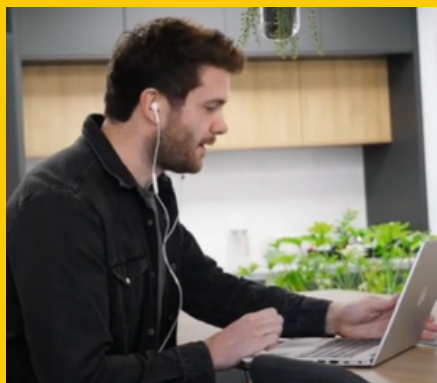
It's just such a pleasure being a Chapter One volunteer because you've got a young child who you can help grow, become more interested in reading and see them develop over the school year. I remember asking my pupil last year what his favourite lesson at school was, and he said, "This one!" which was really lovely.

**EMMA BLANEY, VOLUNTEER,  
EUROMONITOR**

I love my 30 mins every Friday afternoon as a Chapter One volunteer, and would highly recommend getting involved to anyone. Hearing the confidence of my young reader improve is so rewarding. A fantastic program that fully supports its volunteers and is professionally run.

**PATRICK KENWORTHY, VOLUNTEER,  
GRAHAM GROUP**

For me it's the pride you get from seeing the small difference you're making to your pupil's life. And the happy voice I get to hear, the "Hi, it's me, and I remember your name, and I can't wait to meet you. When are you calling me?" It just sets you up for the day! I'm always beaming after a reading session because it's as much fun for me as it is for them.



**Watch this video to find out what our volunteers from Thakeham have to say about volunteering with Chapter One.**

**PETER WELLS, VOLUNTEER,  
DATAGRAPHIC**

Chapter One pupils who receive 16 or more tutoring sessions will, on average, complete the year with a full reading level gain above their peers in the same classrooms with the same teachers. I can confirm that after 16 sessions, the pupil I read with has improved with his reading, but also his confidence. Both important life skills. I love this initiative.

# What does it take to be a Chapter One reading superhero?



To get the most out of the Chapter One volunteering experience, you will need to be...



## **Understanding and empathetic**

As a struggling young reader, your student may be self-conscious about her/his ability, or they may simply have fallen out of love with reading. Some days they may just want to chat or play games. Just do what you can, learning is best when it's FUN!



## **Patient, persistent and resilient**

There will be times when there's so much fun and activity going on in the classroom that the children may not hear the Chapter One laptop ring straight away and there will often be a degree of background noise and potential distractions for your student, even once your session is underway. Children can also be unpredictable, and your reader may be reluctant in the beginning - it can take time to build up your relationship!

## **You DON'T need... ❌**

...to have prior experience of reading with young children - just energy and enthusiasm for books!

...to be a native English speaker - just a proficient one!

...to know anything about teaching methods and phonics - training is provided.

...to be worried about the tech - we make it super simple for you, and live chat (with real people!) is just a click away.

# ONLINE READING VOLUNTEER ROLE DESCRIPTION

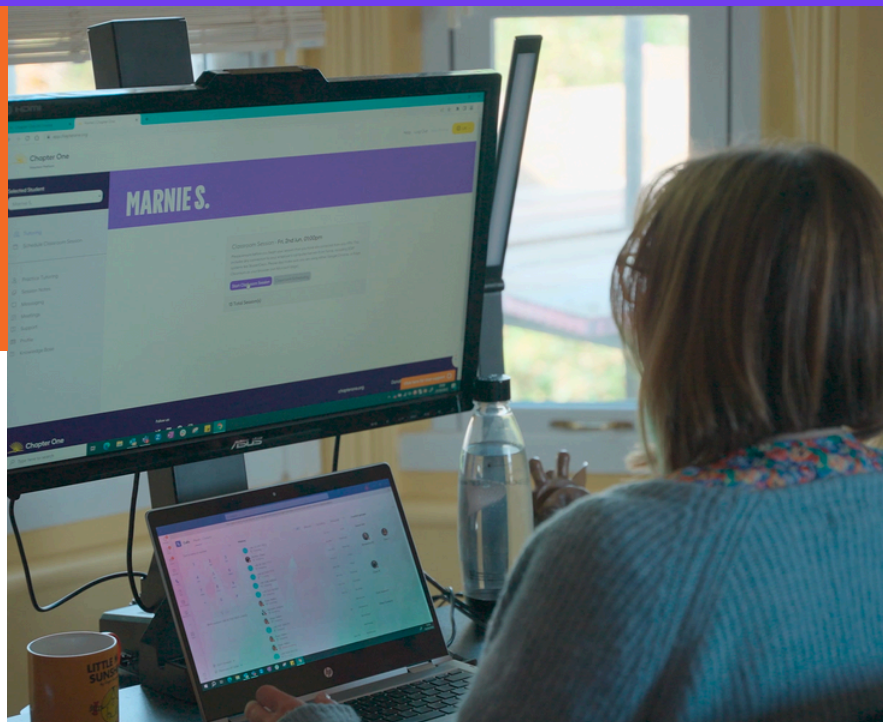
At [Chapter One](#), we transform children's futures with one-to-one reading support at the time when they need it the most. As a **Chapter One online reading volunteer**, you'll play a really important role in building a better future for a child through reading together. You'll support a 5-7-year-old who is falling behind with their reading, helping them with their literacy skills by reading stories and playing games. You'll do one remote 30-minute session a week over the course of a school year, watching your reader progress and grow in confidence.

## Supporting children

- Ensure that we **reach as many children as possible** by delivering one-to-one reading support to as many children as you are able
- **Deliver impactful reading sessions** using the structure provided by Chapter One, whilst adapting it to the child's needs

## Delivering one-to-one reading support

- Use the Chapter One platform to book reading sessions
- Deliver a **one-to-one, 30-minute reading session** with a child, each week, **for the course of the school year**
- Deliver a **structured online reading programme**, which includes reading levelled stories, and fun, interactive word games and activities
- **Give positive feedback** and support to encourage the child, adapting your reading sessions to their needs
- **Provide Chapter One with feedback** about the programme and your experience as a volunteer



## Training

- **Complete initial online training package** including preparing for your first session, navigating the Chapter One platform and how to build confidence in young readers
- **Engage in additional Chapter One training resources** via our Knowledge Base (and other opportunities) to develop your skills as you wish / to build your knowledge

## Safeguarding

- On registration, **read and digest Chapter One's Volunteer Code of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy**
- **Engage with the safeguarding modules** that are part of the Chapter One training
- **Safeguard and promote the wellbeing and welfare of** children you are responsible for, or come into contact with, in accordance with Chapter One's safeguarding policies and procedures
- If you have any concerns about the safety or wellbeing of a child, **you have a duty to report these concerns to [safeguarding@chapterone.org](mailto:safeguarding@chapterone.org)**, so that the right people can help

## Be part of the Chapter One community

- You'll be joining a lively and diverse volunteer community drawn from all our corporate partners. We encourage you to **engage with other volunteers** through chat groups, social media and company events.



## PERSON SPECIFICATION

- A **positive advocate** for Chapter One and our mission
- A keen advocate for **literacy** and its importance
- **Confident computer skills** to enable the use of our online reading platform and online training
- Fluent in English and a competent reader (**note:** English does not need to be your first language)
- A **good communicator** with **excellent listening skills**
- Able to work **1:1 with children** at their pace
- Able to show **enthusiasm, encouragement, empathy and patience, as well as resilience** - children can be unpredictable and your reader may be a little reluctant to start with
- **Trustworthy** with a friendly manner
- **Reliable** with good time management skills
- **Take initiative** with suggestions and ideas for the improvement of Chapter One's service



Chapter One is committed to safeguarding and promoting the well-being and welfare of children and requires everyone associated with the charity, including all trustees, employees, and volunteers to share this commitment. **Successful applicants will need to undergo Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks.**

Chapter One is also committed to promoting a diverse and inclusive community. We aim to create an environment in which all individuals are able to make best use of their skills, free from discrimination or harassment, and in which all decisions are based on merit.

### Follow us on social media!

**LinkedIn:** [chapteroneuk](#)

**Subscribe to our LinkedIn newsletter**

**Twitter:** [@chapterone\\_uk](#)

**Instagram:** [@chapterone\\_uk](#)

**Facebook:** [ukchapterone](#)  
[chapterone.org](#)



## Signing up as a Chapter One Online Reading Volunteer: Frequently Asked Questions



You will find answers to common questions here, or you're always welcome to contact our friendly team with any questions at [uksupport@chapterone.org](mailto:uksupport@chapterone.org).

### What is the commitment?

Being a Chapter One online reading volunteer is fun and rewarding—but it is a commitment to support a child. **Sessions are typically during school hours, once a week, for 30-minutes, over the course of a school year (excluding school holidays), so that is around 30 sessions.** We ask our volunteers to support the same child over the course of an academic year, as we believe this delivers the best results for children's reading confidence and for volunteer satisfaction: you really get a chance to build a relationship and see a child progress and flourish. Our session scheduling platform does give the flexibility to change a session time should you have a conflict or are not able to make a reading session on a particular day, but please think carefully about whether this sustained, weekly commitment will suit you! *Please note:* we do offer volunteers the chance to do more than 30 minutes a week if they would like this additional commitment. When you register you can select the options that suit you.

### Who will I be reading with?

You will be matched with a pupil aged between 5 and 8 who is in either Year 1, Year 2 or Year 3 (England) or P2, P3 or P4 (Scotland) and is attending a school that serves a disadvantaged community in England or Scotland. Teachers select the struggling readers who need extra help. Reading with the same child over the course of the school year enables you to get to know each other and build trust.

## What about safeguarding? Do I need a background check?

As part of [our commitment to child safeguarding](#), all of our Chapter One online reading volunteers are required to have either an Enhanced DBS check (in England) or a PVG check (in Scotland) check in place before they start reading with a child. Please do not worry - this may seem overwhelming, but our friendly team is here to help!

**Please note:** To register as a Chapter One volunteer, you must have been in the UK for the last 5 years, and be willing to provide full address history for this period.

**For volunteers supporting children attending English schools,** the Chapter One programme uses a third-party accredited provider, uCheck, to carry out these DBS checks and the process includes a check of your identity which will be done via an app or a verification ID call. Unfortunately, we are unable to accept DBS checks from other organisations, but if you are registered with the [DBS update service](#), please do let us know.

**For volunteers supporting children attending Scottish schools,** you will obtain a PVG check through Disclosure Scotland, we will guide you through this process during registration.

**Foreign nationals:** You can still complete a DBS/PVG check, but, as above, you will need to have **5 years of UK address history**, with no longer than 6 months spent continuously abroad during this time. You must also possess either a passport (any country), or a valid UK driving licence. Without one of these forms of photo ID, we cannot process the DBS/PVG check. More details of how this process works will be made available when you register with us, but if you have any DBS/PVG specific questions, please contact us at [uksupport@chapterone.org](mailto:uksupport@chapterone.org).

## Do I need experience teaching a child to read to participate in Chapter One? Do I get any training?

**No experience is necessary!** Our training will give you the tools you need to understand the platform and the basics of early reading. Once you've signed up and cleared your background check (DBS or PVG), you will complete two 1 hour mandatory training sessions that you can schedule at a time suitable for you. You will also have access to the resources in our Knowledge Base to help you make the best of your virtual volunteering experience. Our interactive platform easily guides you through every step of volunteering during each session. Please ensure that you use Google Chrome as your web browser.

In addition to the Knowledge Base, we offer all our volunteers the opportunity to join us for **a short series of 40-minute LIVE training and development sessions** via Zoom. The sessions are hosted by Chapter One staff and external child literacy experts to help you and your pupil get the most from your weekly sessions. The sessions cover topics such as how to break the ice with your pupil, how phonics is taught to year 1 children in primary school, how to engage with shy or reluctant readers or with more confident children who seem ready for additional reading challenges.

We also host informal **monthly online reading volunteer Zoom drop-ins** where you can ask us any questions and/or exchange your tips and experiences with other volunteers.

## Do I need any special skills or attributes?

We firmly believe that anyone with patience, empathy and a love of reading can be a Chapter One online reading volunteer! We have outlined the qualities we think make a great 'Chapter One online reading volunteer superhero' [here](#).

## What are the benefits to a child of having Chapter One reading support?

Teachers report that students who have regular, consistent reading sessions with a Chapter One online reading volunteer really flourish as readers! Not only do they develop stronger vocabularies and exhibit improved reading confidence, they also improve their reading fluency, comprehension and oracy (speaking

and communication) skills. In addition, students and their volunteer readers enjoy building warm and meaningful relationships. You can read more about the impact of our programme [here](#).

## **What benefits will I get from volunteering with Chapter One?**

Our online reading volunteers tell us that they find it highly rewarding to experience the growth in their students' abilities and confidence during the school year. The weekly sessions are also an opportunity for you to switch off from the demands of your job for half an hour and gain some headspace. Many of our volunteers tell us they are more productive at work following a reading session with their student.

## **Can I volunteer even if I'm not a native English speaker (or have a strong accent)?**

Yes, absolutely! It's great for children to be exposed to different accents and pronunciation, so as long as you speak English well (which if you're working in the language is likely!) then please do volunteer. The way different words sound with different accents can be a lovely talking point with your pupil.

## **What if I'm not sure I have time to volunteer?**

The main thing to consider is whether you think you can make a sustained, weekly commitment to reading, over the course of an academic year. In any given week, we do of course understand that your diary may change or emergencies arise! Our session scheduling platform therefore gives you the flexibility to change your session time should you have a conflict or are not able to make a reading session on a particular day, but please do bear in mind that it is a weekly commitment for the full academic year.

## **Can I choose which days I volunteer?**

Yes. Volunteers schedule their weekly sessions directly in the Chapter One platform using a calendar shared with the class teacher. The teacher will make it clear which times are available for reading calls and you can choose which slot works best for you.

## **What if I can't make my scheduled reading time slot?**

There is no need to alert your teacher if you are not able to make a session. Simply reschedule for another day/time that week that works for you. Scheduling changes can be made on the same day or weeks in advance.

## **Can I read at the same time every week?**

Absolutely! All available slots can be booked as a recurring booking. Recurring bookings work well if you have a predictable schedule and like the stability of reading at the same time each week.

## **Can I read at a different time every week?**

Also, absolutely! Alternate to the above, all available slots can also be booked as a one off for that week, and then you can go in and book a suitable session time each week. Booking sessions in this way works well if you have an unpredictable schedule or like to mix up the days and times that you spend with your pupil.

## **Can I volunteer with more than one child?**

When you register with us you'll be asked if you can support more than one child. If you can, thank you! We'll let you know if that is possible during the course of the year.

## **When will I actually be able to start reading?**

All Chapter One online reading volunteers have to have their background check (DBS or PVG) in place and have completed training before they can be matched with a pupil. While this process is happening on the volunteer side, our partner schools take a little time to secure parental consent for participating children, and



get the IT systems needed for Chapter One up and running. Usually, if you're part of a team of volunteers from your organisation, we wait until several of you are ready before matching with pupils. For volunteers who sign up during the summer, matching will usually take place in late September or early October. Some volunteers may start a little later. For those who join the programme later, you may need to wait until a pupil becomes available before you can be paired.

## How do I actually connect with my pupil for the sessions?

First, you need to wait until we assign you a pupil and notify you of the classroom launch date. You can then book your first session! As described in our training, you should log on to the [Chapter One platform](#) with your email and the password you created when you registered. [Please ensure that you use Google Chrome at all times for your sessions.](#)

Just before your first session, you will launch the Chapter One application. A designated phone number for your child's classroom will be generated from the Chapter One system. **You use your mobile or a desktop/landline phone to call that number.** A classroom phone greeter (usually one of the children in the class) will answer the phone, you then ask the greeter for your reading buddy by giving their name. The greeter will then find your pupil and they will join you for the session. You and your pupil will share a common screen but you will drive the session, controlling what they see - your student will be in "view-only" mode during the entire session. If you ever need a refresher or have any other questions on how the platform works then you'll always be able to visit our Knowledge Base where we also have an FAQs section and a series of brief videos.

## So I won't actually be able to see my student on the screen at any point during our session?

No. The Chapter One programme is **audio only**, not a video call platform. You will, however, be able to see and direct what your pupil can see and interact with on their screen. Many of our new volunteers are initially surprised to find out the reading sessions are audio only but quickly come to see the benefits. Veteran Chapter One volunteer Kathleen Reeves, who is co-head of HR at Janus Henderson Investors, says: *"It hasn't been a hurdle or an obstacle in any way not being able to see my student...maybe even better because you're both focused on the reading."*

## I want to help but I'm not sure how to work with a pupil and I'm nervous. What should I do?

As soon as your background check (DBS or PVG) is complete, you're able to start to use the practice module on the Chapter One platform to get a sense of how our activities and content look. All our volunteers tell us they feel a little nervous when they first start but the Chapter One platform guides you through the 30-minute tutoring session so you are supported all the way. You'll start with a quick game of flashcards. After flashcards your student can choose a story from a library of levelled books. At any point in your session you can dip into a selection of word games to help your student increase their word knowledge and have some fun.

The Chapter One training will give you an overview of early reading, but don't worry, we're not expecting you to be experts in phonics - that is the teacher's role. We're looking for volunteers who can inspire children to enjoy reading and boost their confidence through practice. Our **Knowledge Base** contains FAQs, phonics resources and lots of tips to make the best of your reading sessions! We run additional LIVE training sessions during the first term of the school year as well as offering our volunteers monthly drop-in Zoom sessions where they can meet other volunteers and ask us questions. Many of our volunteers have set up informal Chapter One support groups with fellow volunteers at their company where they can share wins and experiences and swap tips. If your company is new to the programme, or hasn't yet set up such a group, then why not take the lead and get one off the ground? It's a great way to bond with colleagues!

## Is there an opportunity to meet my student in person?

We hope so! Most schools participate in the annual year-end celebration. This is a wonderful time to meet your student either face-to-face or virtually over Zoom and celebrate all the great work done throughout the school year. Other virtual opportunities for meeting your student are available, for example, before or after the Christmas holidays. These are organised on a school-by-school basis.

## What if I need help during my reading session?

If you run into any tech issues during your reading session, our (real people!) Live Chat Team is available in real-time and can resolve issues quickly. Please do reach out immediately rather than reporting the issue after the event - we can usually help get the session up and running very quickly!

## What tech will I need?

You will need to have access to a laptop or desktop (PC or Mac) with good internet connection AND a phone of some sort - mobile or landline (this is for the audio connection with your pupil). Please note that iPads or tablets are not compatible. You will also need to feel relatively comfortable using technology. We have training and guidance to help you learn how to use the platform.

## Can I volunteer from my work computer?

If you are using a work device to volunteer, we would recommend testing that you can access our reading platform on your device as many organisations have more stringent firewall protection compared to home systems. If you are not able to successfully connect, you won't be able to participate in a Chapter One online reading programme. Additionally, if you plan to use a work device from home and your company uses a VPN to access internal systems, please always ensure that this is **switched off** for Chapter One reading sessions. These should be conducted on a standard internet connection, using Google Chrome.

## What contact and support can I expect from the Chapter One team?

In addition to the Live Chat Team during your sessions, the friendly Volunteer Support Team is always available via [uksupport@chapterone.org](mailto:uksupport@chapterone.org) if you have any non-urgent queries or you'd like a little reassurance before your first session - we are here to help, support and encourage!

Our online training resources are available for you to refer to whenever you want in our Knowledge Base, and you have the option to attend our monthly drop-in support sessions and to receive our monthly volunteers' newsletter, with snippets of news, reminders and tips as well as updates on the latest research around child literacy and social mobility to help cheer you on! Please make sure to check your spam folders if you haven't received anything from us!

## I'm in! How do I sign up?

Fantastic! We can't wait to have you join us! Do check in with any internal communications at your company about Chapter One regarding how you sign up, or with your organisation's dedicated Volunteer Coordinator. If you're not sure who your Volunteer Coordinator is, it is most likely the person in your organisation who sent you this information (but also feel free to reach out to us on [uksupport@chapterone.org](mailto:uksupport@chapterone.org)). Your company will explain if you need to express your interest via your internal company system first. When you are ready to register, there are [five easy steps](#) to your first online reading session, including the DBS/PVG check. Please note that these steps differ for volunteers supporting Scottish children, so please check with your company coordinator about the process you should follow.

## Check out our website:

- [chapterone.org](http://chapterone.org)

## Follow us on social media!

- **LinkedIn:** [chapteroneuk](#)
- **Subscribe to our LinkedIn newsletter**
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