

**Thank you very much for becoming a Literacy Champion! We're so excited to have you on board.**

Literacy is the ability to read, write, speak and listen in a way that lets us communicate effectively and make sense of the world. Lacking vital literacy skills holds a person back at every stage of their life. As a child they won't be able to succeed at school, as a young adult they will be locked out of the job market, and as a parent they won't be able to support their own child's learning.

While some of the responsibility for changing this lies with government and schools, the community also plays a hugely important role.

This is where you come in. We know from our work across the UK that communities working together is the best way to create positive, sustainable change. Your ideas and your hard work as a Literacy Champion have the potential to make a real and lasting difference within your community.

We are truly excited to be working with you to make this happen. We hope that you enjoy your project and we can't wait to hear about what you achieve.



Jonathan Douglas  
Director of the National Literacy Trust

## Why volunteer?

Volunteering as a Literacy Champion is a great way to give something back to your community.

Volunteering is one of the most rewarding things you can do. It can help you to:

- Gain confidence
- Make a difference
- Meet different kinds of people and make new friends
- Be part of a community
- Learn new skills that you can put on your CV



## The training and support available

We will offer a range of training sessions and materials to support you in your role.

All new Literacy Champions will receive an introductory session, What is Literacy?, which will show you the importance of literacy in everyday life and give you ways of explaining this to others around you.

After this, there will be a choice of three sessions, each of which will give you the skills you need for particular Literacy Champions projects:

1. Organising events
2. Storytelling
3. Coaching and mentoring

## The role

Literacy Champions need to:

- Have a few hours every month to commit to the volunteer role
- Be keen to learn ways to help promote literacy in your community and put them into practice

In your Literacy Champions role, we will expect you to:

- Work in your local community to implement ideas that help to improve literacy. This could be with a school, community centre, library, children's centre or elsewhere
- Encourage the people you are working with to make reading part of their everyday lives and something they enjoy
- Spread the word about the importance of literacy through distributing flyers and posters, social media and word of mouth
- Report back on what you do and how it is going

**How would you feel if you didn't understand the words you were reading or hearing?**

**Or if you couldn't find the words to express yourself?**

**This is the case for 1 in 7 people in the UK.**

# Literacy Champions



Changing life stories

## About the National Literacy Trust

The National Literacy Trust is an independent charity dedicated to raising literacy levels

in the UK. The charity runs projects in deprived communities, supports schools and campaigns to make literacy a priority for politicians and parents.

## About the National Literacy Trust Hub on the North Yorkshire Coast

The National Literacy Trust Hub on the North Yorkshire Coast is known locally as Our Stories. Part of the opportunity area programme, a range of partners work together to promote reading, writing and talking, and improve literacy levels in the area.

## What have other Literacy Champions done?

One Literacy Champion in Bradford set up a mini-library and book exchange project at the Girl Guides group where she volunteers. She also ran a series of events, with one based on the *Harry Potter* books:

“We did stuff like making chocolate frog boxes and little chocolate frogs. There was a treasure hunt inspired by when Harry goes to Diagon Alley in the books and he has to buy the things he needs for school. The girls had to go find those things from around the room and each activity had a quote from the book linked to it. It was fun, but the activity was also still heavily rooted in the book. Since we did it, a couple of the girls told me that they’ve found the book in their school library and they’ve taken it out.”

Another Literacy Champion attended the storytelling training, which led her to run a storytelling session in her local library:

“I gathered a group of children on the carpet and on chairs and I just started reading. I felt really happy when I saw the kids were enjoying it. These two little girls were sitting and listening to the story very nicely, making eye contact, smiling, answering questions, and copying my actions in the story. I really enjoyed seeing them do that! I’d never done anything like it before... it was my first time ever, in a library, with strangers, using a loud voice and reading the story with all the actions! I also gave out books and the older children promised to read them to their brothers and sisters!”

### Reading group

Bring your friends together to talk about a book you’ve all read. This also helps to show your children how important reading is to you and inspire their reading habits.



### Storytelling events

Learn how to bring a story to life at our training session and share your storytelling skills with your family or with children at your local school or community centre.

### Book sale or swap

Hold a book sale or swap with your friends and neighbours. You could focus on children’s books or make it more general with books for adults too.



## Literacy Champions activity

There are lots of ways you can champion literacy in your community.

### Library visits

Arrange a trip for your neighbours to visit and sign up to your local library. It’s free to join, welcoming and there are lots of events for children of all ages.



### Book-themed events

Get creative with a *Harry Potter* party or a teddy bear’s picnic! You could read out extracts of the book or run a quiz about the story.

### Spread the word

Help share Our Stories flyers and posters in your local community and post reading tips on social media.



### Recipe book

Food can be a great way to encourage talking and writing. Create a cookbook with recipes written by families in your local community.

## Key messages for you to share with parents in your community

- Sing, rhyme and read with your child every day from birth.
- Sharing stories with your child for just 10 minutes a day is enough to make a difference.
- Talking to your child in your own language will help them develop good English and be more creative.
- Keep reading with your child even if they can read by themselves and talk to them about books and reading.
- Technology can be a great tool for communication but it will have the most impact on literacy skills when you use it together.
- Visit your local library to discover a world of reading – it’s free to join, welcoming and fun.
- Reading doesn’t just mean books – your child might enjoy magazines, comics or blogs.

