

**Alt**

Adult Literacy Trust

# Trustee Recruitment Pack: Chair & Treasurer



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## Welcome from the Chair

Thank you for your interest in becoming a Trustee of the Adult Literacy Trust, or ALT (<https://alt.org.uk/>).

ALT believes that literacy is a right, not a privilege, and wants every adult to have the chance to gain this critical skill. ALT recognises how invaluable literacy is in improving life chances, employability, health and wellbeing. The charity was set up to ensure that individuals who wish to improve their literacy skills receive the help they need to become successful readers, and to increase their life chances.

We provide one-to-one support for disadvantaged adults to improve their reading skills and confidence, as a complement to overstretched formal adult education provision – such as Further Education Colleges and Institutes for Adult Learning – where public provision is perennially underfunded. Utilising specially trained volunteer Reading Coaches, we work closely with formal learning providers to identify adults who could benefit from enhanced support outside of the classroom, to strengthen outcomes from participation in adult community education. Our volunteers act as an essential accompaniment to the progress learners are making in the classroom, and help to accelerate and consolidate that progress.

**Today we have the opportunity to appoint up to two Trustees, including my successor as Chair and a new Treasurer.** We're particularly keen to hear from new voices with a range of different skills and lived experiences, in order to help shape the organisation's strategy, to refine its operational and funding model, and to ensure we achieve the best outcomes for our beneficiaries.

Our current Board features a group of talented, loyal and highly engaged Trustees, and it has been a real privilege to be their Chair for two full terms. We are an inclusive, welcoming organisation, and encourage people from all backgrounds to apply for these roles.

We hope you will want to play a major part in reaching many more people who are desperate to learn to read, to help them – and their families – write a new chapter in their lives. I hope that on reading this pack you feel suitably inspired to join us on our next chapter of growth and development.

We very much look forward to hearing from you.



ROBERT GLUCK OBE FOUNDER & CHAIR



# About ALT

Adult Literacy Trust is a London-based charity tackling one of the most entrenched inequalities in the country: adult low literacy.

Shockingly, **more than 8 million adults in the UK (1 in 6) are 'functionally illiterate'**, lacking the basic reading skills beyond a primary school level, or below. ALT was founded precisely to address this issue. We believe that literacy is a right, not a privilege, and want every adult to have the chance to gain this critical skill.

The lack of reading skills can have devastating impacts on a person's life and is a key contributor to an inter-generational cycle of poverty. ALT's mission is to recruit and train volunteer *Reading Coaches* to work with disadvantaged adults to improve their literacy skills. Our innovative, learner-led approach is unique in the sector. Through one-to-one support, as a complement to teaching in formal settings, our charity is dedicated to ensuring that adults receive the help they need to become successful readers. When adults improve their reading skills and confidence, it has profound and lasting benefits across the full spectrum of their personal, family and civic lives.

Working in partnership with adult education providers, we have expanded from a single site in Hackney four years ago, to supporting

approx. 230 learners a year across eight London boroughs today. Our retention rates are very high: close to 100% of eligible learners and more than 90% of volunteers remain with the programme year-on-year.

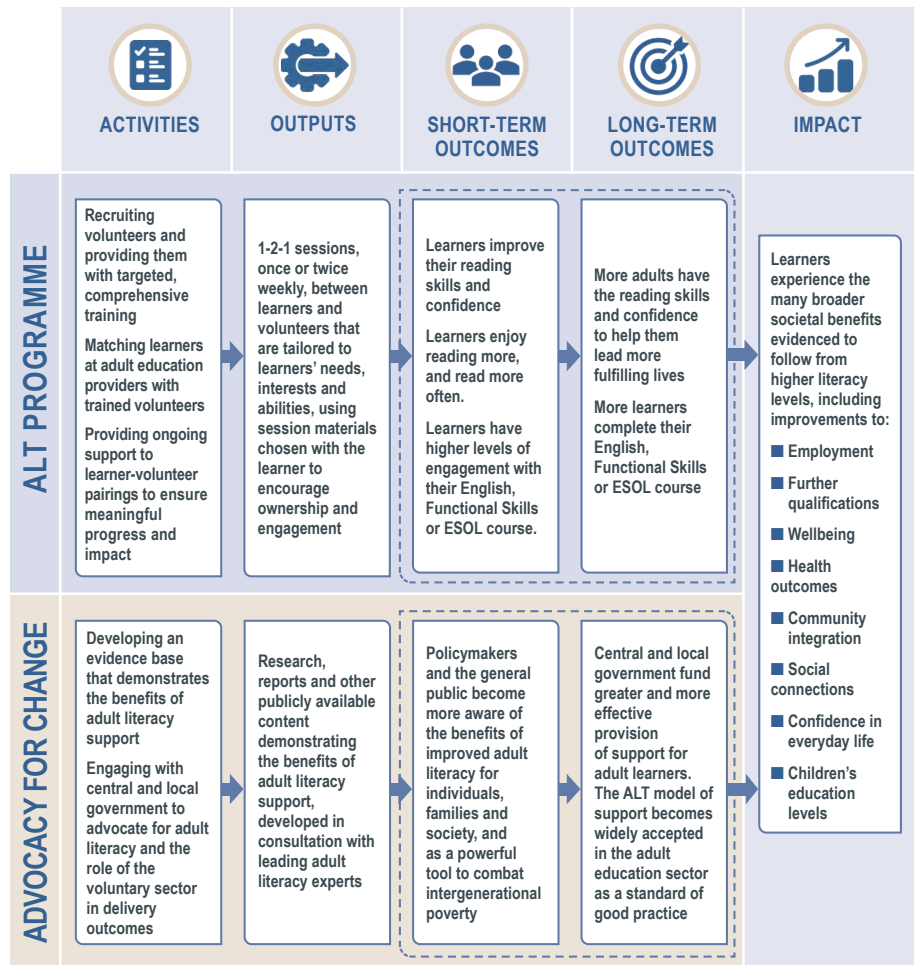
ALT serves some of the capital's most disadvantaged adults. Incorporating their voices has always been a core principle of our organisation. We believe it is fundamental to ensure we are creating relevant, effective, and sustainable solutions, empowering our beneficiaries, and building trust between ALT and the community, by recognising that adult learners are best positioned to articulate their own needs and challenges. We have put in place robust monitoring and evaluation that allows for continuous feedback from the beneficiaries

Alongside our programme delivery, we advocate for urgent action to be taken to tackle the crisis in adult literacy. We are at the forefront of a broad, sector-wide effort to identify barriers and potential solutions to the falling participation in adult literacy learning, and the failure of existing government support schemes to reverse that slide.



## Our Theory of Change

We improve literacy by providing trained volunteers who provide one-to-one support, as a complement to classroom-based adult learning. And we advocate for better support for and investment in the adult education system. Our Theory of Change explains what we seek to achieve, and how we are going about it.

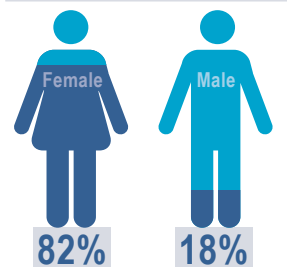


“ My confidence has really grown since I have been reading with ALT. I see lots of improvements at work, I can fill in forms by myself, I can do my own timesheet, and I can help with doing the inventory for the shop. I think everyone in the class should sign up for this programme. ”

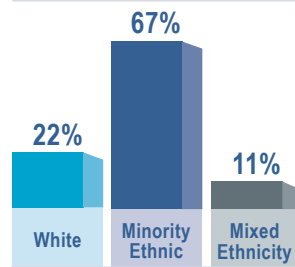
## Our Beneficiaries

We primarily support learners at Entry Levels 2 and 3 of the Ofqual English reading scale – meaning learners who have some very basic reading skills (e.g. the ability to write their address on an official form or read simple words), but who would struggle to read a short letter or email, or to understand the main points of an unfamiliar text. The majority of our adult beneficiaries (78%) are from ethnic minority communities, most speak English as an additional language (54%), and 82% are female.

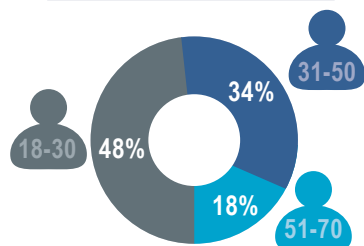
### GENDER



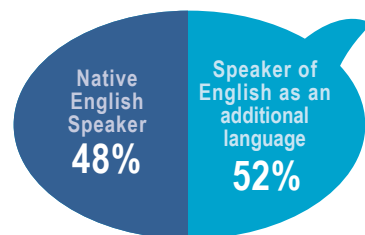
### ETHNICITY



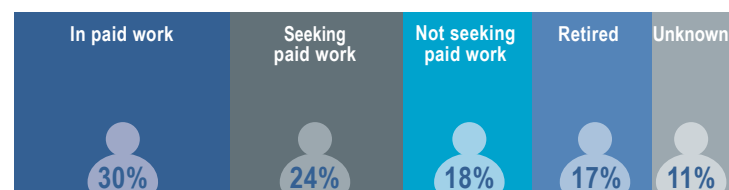
### AGE



### LANGUAGE BACKGROUND



### EMPLOYMENT STATUS



“Before, I was scared to read in front of my children. Now we read together every day. They see me trying, and I see them growing. I feel like I am changing things for them - and for me.”

## Our Impact

Project impacts to date offer clear evidence – supported by research conducted by expert independent evaluators – of the effectiveness of ALT’s model, and the range of important outcomes learners have achieved, from strengthened employability and job retention, to better health indicators.

### Key outcomes for adult learners include:

|                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>GAINS IN EMPLOYMENT</b><br>                         | <b>40% of learners report substantial gains, particularly in respect to:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applying for jobs, enhancing their ability to find and retain decent-paying employment</li> <li>• Starting a new job, many for the first time</li> <li>• Succeeding at work, including promotions and boosted wages</li> <li>• 10% increase in the likelihood of full-time employment and 12% fall in the proportion of learners accessing Jobseeker's Allowance</li> </ul> |
| <b>BENEFITS IN PERSONAL, FAMILY AND CIVIC LIFE</b><br> | <b>95% of learners report essential benefits including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater access to healthcare, housing and other social services</li> <li>• Better health outcomes, including navigating the healthcare system more effectively</li> <li>• 3x more likely to read to their children, enhancing inter-generational literacy</li> <li>• 2x more likely to vote and participate in community activities</li> </ul>                                               |
| <b>BENEFITS IN EVERYDAY LIFE</b><br>                  | <b>90% of learners report greatly improved confidence in reading and in overall self-confidence.</b><br>Examples most often cited include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being able to access news and other crucial resources to make informed decisions</li> <li>• Better able to read travel information/access public transport, and accessing the internet</li> <li>• Engaging more with official paperwork such as forms, letters from the NHS or schools</li> </ul>             |
| <b>GAINS IN EDUCATION</b><br>                        | <b>Teachers note a range of positive outcomes, including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher course retention and increased engagement in class</li> <li>• Accelerated in-course progress, including moving up the reading scale on a fast-tracked basis</li> <li>• Increased end-of-course achievement, including higher pass rates</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>VOLUNTEERS</b><br>                                | <b>Alongside their support to learners, our surveys indicate that volunteers also benefit significantly, including:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 63% cite building practical, transferable skills – including communication, coaching and mentoring – and gaining experience that improves their employability</li> <li>• 78% cite improving wellbeing and engagement in the community</li> </ul>                                                                                 |



“ I used to feel left out – like life was happening around me and I couldn’t keep up. Since joining the programme, I can read signs, fill out forms, and even read a good book. It’s the little things every day that remind me how far I’ve come. ”

# Trustee Responsibilities

As the governing body of Adult Literacy Trust, the Board of Trustees has ultimate responsibility for the governance and strategic direction of the organisation in pursuance of its charitable objectives.

## SPECIFIC TRUSTEE RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

- to ensure that the charity has a clear vision, mission and direction and is focused on achieving these;
- to ensure that Adult Literacy Trust pursues its stated objects, as defined in its governing document, by developing and agreeing a long-term strategy;
- to ensure that Adult Literacy Trust sets goals in line with this strategy, and evaluates performance against agreed targets;
- to ensure that Adult Literacy Trust complies with its governing document, charity law, company law and any other relevant legislation or regulations;
- to ensure that Adult Literacy Trust applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its charitable objects for the benefit of the public;
- to safeguard the good name and values of Adult Literacy Trust;
- to ensure the effective and efficient administration of Adult Literacy Trust, including having appropriate policies and procedures in place;
- to maintain proper financial controls and ensure that the charity's assets are safeguarded;
- to ensure that risk assessments for the business of the charity are carried out and that risk is appropriately managed.



In addition to the above duties, each Trustee should use any specific skills, knowledge or experience they have to help the Board of Trustees reach sound decisions. This may involve scrutinising Board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, or providing advice and guidance on new initiatives or other issues in which the Trustee has special expertise.

**Trustees serve for a renewable three-year period of office.**

# Role of the Chair and the Treasurer

In addition to the general responsibilities of a Trustee, the duties of the Chair and of the Treasurer include the following:

## ROLE OF THE CHAIR

- to provide leadership to Adult Literacy Trust and the Board by ensuring that the organisation remains focused on the delivery of Adult Literacy Trust's charitable purposes and public benefit;
- to chair and facilitate Board meetings and ensure discussions reach a clear conclusion;
- to ensure systems are in place to check that decisions taken at meetings are implemented;
- to act as a spokesperson for the Board, and for the charity, as appropriate;
- to work with the Clerk to the Trustees to plan the annual cycle of Board meetings, and other general meetings where required;
- to set the agendas for Board and other general meetings, having regard to suggestions from Trustees of items that should be considered;
- to oversee the development of the Board of Trustees including induction, training, appraisal and succession planning.

## ROLE OF THE TREASURER

- to monitor the financial standing of the charity and report to the Board and CEO regarding cash-flow forecasting, income streams, out-going expenses and the overarching strategic management of ALT's financial resources;
- to oversee the charity's financial risk-management process and report on the financial health to the Board of Trustees at regular intervals;
- to act as a counter signatory on cheques and applications to funders and ensure that annual accounts are submitted to all relevant regulators in a timely fashion;
- liaise with external auditors on financial issues and ensure that ALT's finances are responsibly managed/invested for the betterment of its work and for the beneficiaries it serves.



We anticipate there being time for our new Chair to have an effective handover with our outgoing Chair, Robert Glick OBE. There is also some flexibility when it comes to the timing of the new Chair assuming their role.

# Who We're Looking For

For the role of Chair, we are particularly looking for someone with substantial experience of UK charity governance, ideally as the Chair or Deputy Chair of a charity or in another senior trustee role.

For the role of Treasurer, we are looking to recruit people who have significant knowledge, skills and experience of charity finances/accounting.

We are looking for outstanding people with a strong commitment to our values and our aims. We are keen to ensure our diversity by recruiting people who have a background or experience in the communities we aim to serve, and to ensure the voices of people from diverse backgrounds are properly represented.

## The general attributes we're looking for in potential Trustees and a new Chair include:

- |                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ■ Good, independent judgement                                                                        | ■ An ability to command trust and respect                                                                                                          |
| ■ An ability to think creatively and strategically                                                   | ■ An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties and responsibilities of being a Trustee                                                      |
| ■ An ability to collaborate and work as part of a team                                               | ■ A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort required                                                                                   |
| ■ Effective interpersonal skills, and a willingness to act as an ambassador for Adult Literacy Trust | ■ A commitment to Nolan's seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. |
| ■ An active commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion                                            |                                                                                                                                                    |



Trustees must be over the age of 18 and must not be disqualified under the Charities Act.

# Expectations

## WHAT WE ASK OF YOU:

- To serve an initial term of 3 years, with the possibility of re-appointment
- To attend 4 x 1.5-hour Board Meetings a year, and an annual Away Day
- To sit on one of the Board's Sub-Committees (Programme Development; Communications & Advocacy; Finance, Audit & Risk). Each Sub-Committee has between 2-4 x 1-hour meetings a year
- To provide specialist advice and expertise as required and appropriate
- To advocate and champion ALT's work, values, ambition and strategic direction.

## WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM US:

- The opportunity to help shape and play a key role in the future direction of the charity
- The opportunity to be part of an active, loyal and engaged group of Trustees
- Flexibility when it comes to attending meetings either in person or remotely via video call
- A full Trustee induction with current Trustees and permanent staff.

Please note that Trustee roles are voluntary and therefore unpaid, however reasonable out-of-pocket expenses can be covered.

## TIME COMMITMENT

The Board meets 4 or 5 times a year, most often in the early evening, in central London or remotely. As a volunteer-led charity, our Trustees play an active and engaged role in supporting the organisation.

Trustees have opportunities to contribute to particular areas of our work, drawing on their own skills and experience, as well as helping to shape and inform the Board's strategic decisions.

## How to apply

Please send a CV and short statement of interest (500 words max.) to: [info@alt.org.uk](mailto:info@alt.org.uk)  
The closing date for submission of applications is 7th December 2026.

Shortlisted candidates will be invited to an interview (in-person or on-line) on 7th or 8th January 2027. If you are shortlisted for interview, you may be asked for names and contact details of two people to provide references.





[alt.org.uk](http://alt.org.uk)