

Volunteer Role Description: 'Space for Reading Volunteer' (Weston Library)

The 'Space for Reading' is an area with comfortable seating and shelves of books located in the Blackwell Hall (main, public entrance hall) of the [Weston Library](#). We hope it makes the Library a friendlier place! It also helps to highlight current exhibitions and our work with community partners. Visitors can relax, chat, and dip in to assorted reading material on a particular theme. For example, the current theme of 'bird'-inspired books complements the ['Wonder of Birds' exhibition](#). Staff and community group leaders also organise occasional activities and events in the space.



We're looking for some new volunteers to join the team and help encourage even more visitors to use the space and browse the wide selection of books (which volunteers help to choose). If you enjoy meeting people of all ages and backgrounds and love reading and/or finding out about the world, then we would love to hear from you!



The role includes:

- welcoming visitors and explaining the current theme, giving them time to explore the books, and being on hand to answer questions and/or chat about the books if they would like to; this includes getting to know the related exhibition and books so that you can make recommendations
- encouraging visitors to engage in any extra, available activities relating to the books (e.g., simple family friendly activities or object handling), and joining in any organised activities or events yourself
- looking after the space: making sure it is tidy and welcoming, e.g., by returning books to shelves, and keeping a basic inventory
- supporting evaluation by observing and recording how visitors use the space, and asking visitors to complete surveys

The role *could* also include more experienced volunteers suggesting ideas for engaging people with the Space for Reading and working with staff to make them happen (e.g., running a book group, poetry session, craft activity).

The team is coordinated by Neil Stevenson, the Learning & Engagement Manager at the Bodleian Libraries, but Front of House staff provide practical support on the day.

Timing and Commitment

Volunteers sign up for shifts and join a rota via MyImpactPage.com. The current rota will run until the end of the year, when the 'Birds' exhibition finishes. On Mondays - Saturdays, the shifts are **10 am - 1 pm** and **1 - 4 pm**. On Sundays, they are **11.30 am - 1.30 pm** and **1.30 - 3.30 pm**. Volunteers ideally **help at least once or twice a month, but there is flexibility in the rota.**

We are looking for volunteers who:

- have a warm, friendly personality and enjoy interacting with people of all ages and backgrounds, from all around the world
- will embrace the opportunity to welcome both first-time visitors and people who have visited the Weston Library before (this includes visitors who may be less comfortable or confident entering a space like this), and help ensure they have a positive experience
- enjoy reading and/or have a curiosity about the world, and want to inspire the same in others
- have at least basic speaking skills in English, which will be the common language
- will enjoy the variety associated with helping in a 'front of house' role and won't mind that sometimes it's quieter or busier than at other times

Why volunteers might enjoy this opportunity; it's a chance to:

- discover and engage with a wide variety of books and learn about a variety of topics
- connect with a variety of visitors, volunteers, and staff at the Weston Library
- develop and/or practise communication and customer service skills, while gaining an insight into how people use a public, community library space like this

Other practicalities

- This is usually a solo role, and volunteers are welcome to sit and read or do other work during quieter moments. However, they should always be ready to stop and re-engage with the activity whenever visitors approach. At weekends or other busier times, volunteers sometimes help in pairs.
- Volunteers may sit or stand for this role. The Blackwell Hall has step-free entry from Broad Street. Blue badge holders can park on the street nearby.
- Volunteers can claim reimbursement of travel expenses up to £5 per session.
- This opportunity is open to volunteers aged 18+.
- Volunteers new to onsite GLAM volunteering will need to be registered on the Volunteer Service mailing list (MyImpactPage.com), and the Volunteer Service will need to have received two references and done an ID check before volunteers can start in this role.

Next steps...

Potential volunteers can find out more at a briefing session held in the Space for Reading:
Saturday 11th July, 10.30 - 11.15 am.

The briefing is a chance for staff to explain more about the role and for both sides to get a better sense of whether it's a good fit. Volunteers who are then invited to join the team will train for the role by doing their first shift alongside a member of staff, followed by a review.

If you're interested in getting involved, please [complete this very brief form](#) by the end of the day on Monday 6th July. Someone will then email to confirm if you have a space at a briefing session.

Any information you provide will be kept in accordance with our [Data Retention Schedule](#).