

## Role Description: Conversational English Volunteer

**Reports to:** Conversation Club Co-ordinator

**Remuneration:** This is a volunteer role and no remuneration is offered. Toynbee Hall will reimburse phone expenses that incurred following the conversation calls.

**Tenure:** This is an open-ended role, but requires a commitment to a minimum tenure to be set by Toynbee Hall, and is subject to periodic review to ensure that both Toynbee Hall and the volunteer are happy with the work being done. Each volunteer will agree with their conversation buddy the time of their calls. This is expected to be one hour per week.

**Location:** Home based.

### Background:

Toynbee Hall is a community organisation that pioneers ways to reduce poverty and disadvantage. Based in the East End of London, we work alongside people who live here, to tackle unfairness and make this a place where everyone has an equal chance to thrive. We take an asset-based approach to our work, and believe everyone has something valuable to offer in the fight for a fairer London. What we learn from our work in London we use to influence change across the UK.

After having to close our vibrant community centre due to the COVID-19 crisis, we were unable to continue with our newly formed Conversation Club, aimed at helping people to practise speaking English in a relaxed setting. The Conversation Club model plays a complementary role to formal ESOL provision. There is still a need for our clients to improve their speaking skills and confidence and being able to do this by telephone or computer enables clients and volunteers to work safely from home while we work to adapt our provision in the light of current restrictions.

You will need to be a friendly, approachable person who knows how to listen and can plan (with the use of provided resources) conversations that are relevant to your conversation buddy. You will need to record basic details of conversations and pass on any issues to the Community Team where we may be able to provide people with further support.

In exchange you will get to volunteer in an organisation that really cares about the difference it makes. You will be part of a diverse team of staff and volunteers that are attempting to offer holistic support to the people of East London in order to make this a fairer place to live. You will be managed in a supportive way, and provided with training and supervision opportunities.

### Role Purpose:

You will be making regular conversational English calls to a member of the local community and getting to know their needs in terms vocabulary and topics that will be useful to them. You will complete a post call report after each call, and liaise with the Community Team at Toynbee Hall to follow up any issues that the person you are supporting has raised.

### Responsibilities and Accountabilities:

#### Responsibilities:

- a) Keep in touch consistently and appropriately with the person you have been paired up with
- b) Complete post call reports within up to 3 days after the call took place
- c) Report any urgent issues to the Community Team
- d) Work towards the overall goal of lessening isolation and inequalities in East London
- e) Work within Toynbee Hall's Policies at all times, and actively promote Safeguarding in your volunteering

#### Managing Yourself:

- a) Be mindful of when the conversational English relationship is impacting your own wellbeing
- b) Raise issues to the Community Team in a timely manner
- c) Communicate with the Community Team in a situation when you are no longer able to volunteer, or require to take a break for a specified amount of time

### Key Knowledge and Skills:

	Essential	Desirable
Ability to communicate clearly in spoken English, especially with those approaching it as learners	x	
Ability to plan open questions for conversations and to use and to help build up a bank of resources	x	
Excellent inter-personal skills, particularly building rapport through conversation, active listening, communication with a wide range of people	x	
Real interest in and commitment to conversational English as a means of improving the wellbeing of people in East London and the local community	x	
Ability to be non-judgemental, empathetic, and compassionate in dealings with people	x	
Willingness to work with a diverse range of people	x	
Willingness to accept advice and criticism	x	
Understanding and respect for the need for confidentiality in dealings with people	x	
Perseverance to overcome adversity	x	
Willingness to work according to the policies and practices of Toynbee Hall	x	
Willingness to undertake regular reflective practice and seek opportunities for development of skills and knowledge		x

### Training

Toynbee Hall provides all necessary induction and training, and encourages and, where possible, supports the upgrading of appropriate skills and qualifications.

### Volunteers

Volunteers are at the heart of Toynbee Hall's work. The organisation is committed to involving volunteers in its continuous development and to offering volunteers the best of experiences. All Toynbee Hall staff members will be expected to support the volunteering ethos and to work alongside the volunteer team to promote and facilitate the involvement of volunteers wherever appropriate.