

Role Description: Teaching Assistant



Responsible to: Project Manager (Nicola Brooks)

Responsible for: Action Language students

Organisational Context: Action Foundation is a charity established in 2009 which tackles exclusion by providing opportunity. As Action Language, this is expressed through providing free English classes to refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants unable to access mainstream classes. During the Covid-19 pandemic we adapted our provision to support learners remotely with online classes and resources, paper materials and phone calls. The 2021-2022 academic year will include a blend of this remote provision and face-to-face sessions at our schools in Newcastle and Sunderland, as well as in community venues.

Role Description: To work with the volunteer teachers of our free classes to support students in their English learning, through providing feedback and friendly interaction, in small groups in a class (online and face-to-face), all with support and direction from staff and volunteer teachers. Volunteers will need to be able to commit to supporting learners regularly, and inclusivity and teamwork is vital.

Time Commitment in Newcastle: 2 hours per week (minimum of one class) Monday to Friday between 9.30am and 4.30pm.

Time Commitment in Sunderland: 2 hours per week (minimum of one class) Tuesday to Friday between 10.00am and 2.30pm.

Time Commitment on Zoom: about 1.5 hours per week (minimum of one class) Monday to Friday between 9.00am and 4.30pm.

Tasks & Responsibilities:

The following points are a guide, rather than a definitive list, to help with role definition. ESOL Assistants are expected to:

- Support the teacher in the delivery of English language lessons;
- Provide English support to students individually and in small groups;
- Provide English support to larger groups where appropriate;
- Provide 1-to-1 English support to students over the phone;
- Attend sessions (face-to-face or online) at the times agreed in advance with the coordinator;
- Attend appropriate training sessions or meetings (with the Project Manager or Coordinator), including online;
- Treat all information about students as confidential;
- Respect the privacy of the students;

- Maintain appropriate professional relationships and boundaries with staff, volunteers, and students;
- Treat all students equally and be sensitive to cultural and religious differences;
- Report any concerns/difficulties regarding students directly to the Coordinator or Project Manager as early as possible;
- Abide by the ethos of Action Language.

It is important to understand there are certain roles that a teaching assistant must not undertake - these include:

- Counselling and advice;
- Any role that is usually done by a skilled professional, e.g. taking responsibility for someone's financial and/or legal affairs;
- Physical help of any kind if you have not been trained;
- The role of a healthcare professional;
- Pro-actively sharing your personal beliefs.

Personal Specification

Knowledge/Understanding

- A genuine desire to support asylum seekers and other migrants
- An understanding of the need to maintain safe professional boundaries when volunteering
- An understanding of the need to maintain confidentiality
- Some basic awareness of the issues facing asylum seekers and other migrants (desirable)
- Experience with vulnerable people in a similar capacity, either paid or unpaid (desirable)

Skills/Abilities

- A commitment to empowering and enabling others
- Warmth, understanding, sensitivity and a willingness to listen
- Good functional use of English
- Strong interpersonal/communication skills
- A flexible approach to students whose needs may vary or change over time
- The ability to be supportive and non-judgemental regardless of students' age, race, sexuality, religion or disability
- To be willing to learn from own and others' experiences
- To maintain strong lines of communication with the Project Manager and Coordinator