

## Language Connect Guidance

Language Connect-Somerset is a new initiative, which aims at bringing together people across Somerset who would like to improve their conversational English skills with fluent English speakers. Our ethos is that the best way to learn a language is by practicing to speak it in a relaxed and supportive environment.

### **Who will I be speaking with?**

We will try where possible to match the Learner and their Learning Partner on certain criteria. This includes their availability, whether they would like to speak to someone who is male or female and their hobbies and interests. We hope that this will be a foundation to build a positive relationship.

### **Do I need any qualifications to be involved?**

There is no requirement for either the Learner or their Learning Partner to have any formal qualifications. We just ask that both parties are motivated and enthusiastic about the learning journey ahead.

### **How will we communicate?**

Communication will be via a video conferencing platform. You can use whichever platform you are both comfortable with, examples include, WhatsApp, Skype and Zoom. We ask that you do not use Messenger due to issues around confidentiality. The Learning Partner is encouraged to send a 'welcome note' via text message to reassure the Learner before the first video call. We also ask that the Learning Partner initiates the first call as we are aware this can be daunting for someone whose first language is not English.

### **How many times a week will I need to commit to?**

We recommend that you are able to commit to a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 3 sessions per week.

### **How long is each session?**

Each session will last for around 20 minutes. We suggest using a timer so that sessions don't over run.

### **Do I need to pay or am I paid to participate?**

No, this is a project where both the Learner and Learning Partner are volunteering their own time.

## **What is the process to start my involvement with Language Connect?**

There is an application form that we ask all Learners and Learning Partners to fill out. If you have difficulties in filling out this form please contact your Language Connect Co-ordinator who will be able to help you.

Please contact: Jusna Hussain [Jusna@somersetccc.org.uk](mailto:Jusna@somersetccc.org.uk) 07946 461544 or

Michal Puzynski [Michal@somersetccc.org.uk](mailto:Michal@somersetccc.org.uk) 07377 363165

## **What if I decide that I no longer want to take part or I find it difficult to speak with my Learner/ Learning Partner?**

If at any point you would like to stop being involved in the project, please contact your Language Connect Co-ordinator. Similarly if you are finding it difficult to communicate with your Learner or Learning Partner please let us know and we will look at matching you with someone more suitable.

## **The First Conversation**

### **For the Learner**

You may wish to take notes during the meeting to help you practice at a later date.

Making mistakes is a natural part of learning a language and it's usually when the best learning takes place!

*Let your Learning Partner know;*

The reason you are trying to improve your English skills. Is it for a particular purpose like searching for a job or just for social reasons?

Do you have a disability which may affect your learning? Examples include Dyslexia, and Hearing/ Visual loss.

## For the Learner AND Learning Partner

It would be helpful to both introduce yourselves and then follow up with questions for the other person. A few things you might want to include are;

*My name is...          I work as.....          My hobbies are.....*

You should prepare some subjects before the meeting you would like to talk about or some questions that you can refer to when you feel there is nothing more to discuss.

Subjects may include;

*Travel, Sports, Pets, Cinema, History or Food.*

You could also try to undertake some simple role play. The ideas are endless!

At the end of each session remember to set up a date and time for the next session. Make sure that communication between the Learner and their Learning Partner only takes place during the sessions unless either party needs to cancel an upcoming session.

**Remember;** it takes time to learn a language. So whether you are a Learner or a Learning Partner, it's important to relax, persevere and enjoy the process.