



SUPPORT
THROUGH
COURT

25
years

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION PACK



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ABOUT US

Welcome, and thank you for your interest in a volunteering role at Support Through Court!

This pack has been designed to provide you with everything you need to know about our charity, the service we offer, and what you can expect when volunteering with us.

We are a national charity promoting access to justice by providing emotional and practical support to people facing civil and family courts without legal representation.

Our mission is to support litigants in person to manage their cases for themselves so they can represent themselves to the best of their abilities.

Our service is free, independent, and confidential. We are based in court and University buildings across England and Wales. Our service is delivered by trained and valued volunteers who are committed to supporting people with empathy, respect, and understanding.

Our National Helpline and Online service provide remote support through telephone and video calls.

We value diversity, promote equality, and challenge discrimination. We are acutely conscious of the inequality our clients suffer as a result of appearing in court without a lawyer, which can be compounded by additional needs and economic or social status.

Our service is volunteer led and relies on the commitment of 1,500 volunteers nationwide. Volunteers come from a wide and diverse range of backgrounds, including students, part-time workers, and retired professionals.

We hold the Cyber Essentials Plus certificate, demonstrating our commitment to robust cyber security controls. This government-backed certification ensures that we maintain the highest standards to protect the data we hold.

We continue to make improvements to our service, striving to do more to support people facing court alone.

HOW VOLUNTEERS CONTRIBUTE TO OUR MISSION

Access to justice should be fair, inclusive, and grounded in dignity and knowledge. Everyone should be able to access emotional support and practical guidance when navigating the civil and family courts or tribunals without legal representation. No one should face court alone.

Our support goes beyond court proceedings. We help people manage wider challenges in their lives, encouraging them to think through their next steps and signpost them to specialist organisations for legal advice, financial guidance, housing support, or other help. None of this would be possible without the commitment and dedication of our volunteers.

In 2025-26, we provided support on 51,116 occasions. Every 90 seconds, someone comes to Support Through Court for help – that's around 43 clients an hour.

This is made possible only through the dedication of our incredible volunteers and the generosity of our supporters. With more volunteers on board, we could help even more people facing family and civil proceedings alone. In Manchester, for example, with 10 more volunteers, we could help 960 more people a year.



ABOUT OUR CLIENTS

In 2025-26, 52% of the cases we helped with were civil cases and 50% were family cases. The top 3 civil areas were money claims, housing issues and employment issues, and the top 3 family areas were child arrangement orders, domestic abuse related orders, and divorce.

Our clients' circumstances vary enormously. We support people who are confident online and those who are digitally excluded; those with some understanding of the system and those who feel completely overwhelmed. Some are coping well; others face struggles with their cognitive, mental, or physical health. For many, English is not their first language.

TYPES OF CASES WE'VE SUPPORTED PEOPLE THROUGH

Civil 52%

Family 50%

We recognise that legal issues do not exist in isolation; they are often accompanied by trauma, confusion, and emotional distress alongside difficulties with housing, debt, health, relationships, or family breakdown.

That is why we take a compassionate, person-centred approach, ensuring individuals feel supported, empowered, and able to engage effectively with legal processes.



39%
have a serious
health issue



25%
English is their
second language



48%
in receipt of
benefits



53%
from ethnic minority
backgrounds

Margaret's story

Margaret is a retired grandmother living in Wales. She has a daughter, Amy, and a young grandson, Luca, who requires additional support due to his additional needs. Margaret had previously enjoyed a close relationship with Luca, but after tensions developed between her and Amy, she had not seen him for several months.

Margaret was deeply concerned about her grandson's wellbeing. She feared that Amy's new partner might be mistreating him, both physically and emotionally, and wanted to ensure he was safe while also maintaining their relationship. Margaret was seeking to get contact with Luca once a month, restoring regular contact and gaining reassurance about his welfare.

When Margaret came to Support Through Court, she was emotionally distressed by the situation. A volunteer supported her by carefully explaining the questions on the court form and helping her articulate her concerns clearly.

The volunteer also provided emotional support, listening to her worries and guiding her through the process step by step. This allowed Margaret to accurately complete her application and feel confident in submitting it to the court.

As a result of the support, Margaret's stress was relieved. Understanding the process, the next steps, and the possible outcomes made her feel more confident and optimistic about the future. She left feeling reassured that she could continue building a relationship with her grandson and that his safety would be considered.



Farah's story

Farah is a single mother of two children under 18. She currently lives in the former family home with her children, including her daughter who has a disability. Following her divorce, her ex-husband, who is the legal owner of the property, indicated that he wanted to sell the house and had offered her half of its value.

For Farah, this would mean losing the only stable home her children had known. She was seeking a financial remedy order to enable her and her children to remain in the property. The prospect of navigating court proceedings alone felt overwhelming, particularly given the potential impact on her children's stability and wellbeing.

Farah attended an initial hearing, but it was adjourned after her ex-husband provided medical evidence explaining why he had been unable to complete the required forms. The delay added to her anxiety and uncertainty. When Farah came to Support Through Court, she felt confused and unsure about the

legal terminology and court process. Volunteers helped her complete the required forms and explained the wording in clear, accessible language. They broke down each stage of the proceedings so she understood what would happen next and what was expected of her.

A volunteer, Helena, also attended court with Farah, providing reassurance and helping her feel less alone in the process. With clearer information and practical support, she felt more confident expressing her wishes and representing herself. Her wellbeing improved as she became better informed and more in control of the situation.

Farah is currently waiting for a new hearing date and has booked a further appointment to draft a letter in preparation. She shared her appreciation for the support she received, saying:

"[Support Through Court] volunteers are brilliant. Helena helped me since the start — she does an amazing job. I've become less confused and better informed."

WILL I HAVE FUN?

Our staff and volunteers consistently tell us that the best part of working at Support Through Court is the supportive and friendly environment in our offices. Our diverse volunteer groups bring together a variety of skills, experiences and knowledge, creating a supportive, fun environment that enables everyone to learn and share their knowledge and skills in an impactful way.

As a Support Through Court volunteer, there are plenty of opportunities to get involved beyond your volunteering role.

From taking part in fundraising activities and challenge events to attending celebrations and other networking events, there are many ways to support our work and connect with others who share your commitment to access to justice.

Whether you're raising funds, cheering on fellow supporters or joining us at one of our special events, you'll be part of a vibrant and supportive community while helping to ensure that nobody has to face court alone.

One volunteer shared:

"Volunteering at the Legal Walk was a meaningful experience that allowed me to support a cause dedicated to improving access to justice. I had fun working alongside fellow volunteers, meeting new people. It reminded me that volunteering can be both impactful and fun."



HOW DOES VOLUNTEERING WITH US BENEFIT YOU?

- Make a meaningful contribution to your community while developing valuable skills, building relationships, and supporting access to justice.
- Depending on your background and life journey, you can develop valuable skills or bring a wealth of knowledge, experience, and practical skills to make a valuable contribution to our organisation and the people we support.
- Develop new skills by gaining practical experience in communication, teamwork, leadership, problem-solving, and time management.
- An opportunity to use your skills and experience by mentoring other volunteers and watching them grow in confidence, delivering real life impact.
- Meet people from different backgrounds, make new friends, and build valuable professional connections. Working with diverse groups helps you develop empathy, understanding, and respect for different perspectives.
- Enhance your CV and skills as volunteering will provide an experience which demonstrates initiative, responsibility, and commitment, making you more attractive to employers and future education.
- Continuous learning and networking opportunities, and a basic reference available on request.
- Opportunities to socialise with your peers outside the office at social events, seasonal events and fundraising socials throughout the year.
- An opportunity for volunteers to use their experiences and insight to feed into organisational work and service development, with the option to attend two national volunteer meetings per year and one volunteer voice conference.
- Access to our monthly newsletter, where we share updates and opportunities across the organisation, as well as celebrating volunteer contributions, keeping our teams informed and connected no matter where you are based.



WHAT SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE TO YOU?

A service staff member will always be available to assist you to ensure you feel supported and can discuss any challenges or concerns.

Training and access to our online platform which hosts a variety of e-modules will be available to help you in your role.

Volunteers have access to LawCare, an independent mental health charity, which provides confidential emotional support to individuals working in or connected to the legal profession. LawCare focuses on wellbeing issues such as stress, anxiety, and other challenges that may arise in the workplace.

We also hold an annual IT roadshow, where volunteers can sit down with our IT manager and get help with any IT related issues or questions they have, including supporting you with your personal IT.



WHO CAN VOLUNTEER?

We welcome applicants aged 18 or over with the necessary skills, experience and time such as:

- ✓ Experience of working with people
- ✓ Good verbal and written communication skills
- ✓ Initiative, resourcefulness and problem-solving skills
- ✓ Compassion
- ✓ Reliability
- ✓ Available two days per month, for a minimum of a year
- ✓ A basic level of IT competency is expected. Volunteers should be comfortable using email, accessing online systems, and carrying out simple administrative tasks. Training will be provided on any organisation-specific systems required for the role.

If you are a practicing solicitor or barrister, you are still eligible to volunteer, but additional guidance applies. If you are practicing, please inform the relevant service staff member when you make your application.



YOUR ROLE

The support you wil give to clients includes:

- Actively listening to clients' stories, help clients to problem-solve and support them with their next steps.
 - Explain court processes to our clients in clear language, without using jargon, so they understand what to expect and how to proceed.
 - Complete court forms and provide guidance about court etiquette.
 - Help clients use HMCTS online application services.
 - Attend in-person hearings and remote hearings via telephone/Teams; to provide emotional support and to take notes so you can explain to the client what happened in the hearing, as well as any next steps.
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- Provide emotional and practical support for clients, pre-and-post-hearing.
 - Support clients over the phone when required locally and support our National Helpline.
 - Source reliable information and signpost clients to public resources or other agencies where specialist advice is needed.

EXPECTATIONS

- Keep accurate records using our online database.
- Abide by our policies and procedures.
- Commit to the minimum requirement of 2 days a month or 4 half days a month.
- Complete all mandatory training and read and sign our handbook and key policy agreements.
- Be punctual and reliable.
- Continuously engage in training resources and monthly national communications.
- Maintain a positive outlook and a willingness to be flexible and adaptable if necessary.
- Maintain professional boundaries with clients, fellow volunteers, and staff.
- Book appointments for clients and manage client queries sent via email and voicemail.



You will have the opportunity, if you choose, to take on extra responsibilities as a lead volunteer and be more involved with the wider organisation, as your experience and confidence grow.

Lead Volunteers provide guidance and encouragement to fellow volunteers, helping to maintain a welcoming and supportive environment, and act as a point of contact during shifts. They work closely with service staff to promote good practice, support communication within the team, and help ensure the service is delivered safely, consistently, and in line with organisational values and procedures.

This role offers the chance to develop leadership, communication, mentoring, and problem-solving skills, while making a meaningful contribution to the quality of the service. Lead Volunteers receive additional training, regular supervision, and ongoing support to help them feel confident in their responsibilities, making this an excellent opportunity for those looking to further their personal and professional development.

"I have been a volunteer with Support Through Court since it opened and I continue to volunteer because I genuinely believe that Support Through Court provides a vital service to those in need. Time, patience and varied experience are what volunteers offer to clients, and the service we provide is tailored to meet their individual needs. It is surprising how quickly one can get a feel for a case, from the simple to the complex. And, regardless of the complexity, each case is highly personal and very important to the person involved. The gratitude clients express for the help they receive - which is sometimes very basic - is quite moving."

-Rosie, Volunteer, Royal Courts of Justice



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

“Can I volunteer remotely?”

Yes, you can volunteer remotely at our National Helpline and/or Online Service.

“Are travel expenses paid? “

Support Through Court provides a volunteer travel expense allowance of a maximum of £9/day (£14.65/day in London) on any full day volunteering.

Please note that we cannot pay travel expenses for students volunteering through their University.

“What should I wear?”

When volunteering in court or at a remote hearing, volunteers are to follow the dress code. Our reputation is important. Volunteers should:

- Dress smartly enough to attend a court hearing
- Avoid revealing clothing
- Do not wear casual clothes, such as jeans or trainers

You may dress casually when volunteering on the National Helpline or providing remote support, but please think about your presentation if you are on a video call.

“Is previous experience needed?”

You do not need previous experience or knowledge of the law. Training and peer support will be provided throughout your placement.

A basic level of IT competency is expected. Volunteers should be comfortable using email, accessing online systems, and carrying out simple administrative tasks. Training will be provided on how to use our systems.

“What happens if I'm unavailable?”

You will have access to your services calendar where you will have the autonomy to add yourself to the Rota when you are available.



ONBOARDING AND TRAINING

Support Through Court will give you the training and support needed for you to work in a safe environment. We provide a structured induction process, and each volunteer is provided with a learning plan with a combination of mandatory and optional training elements.

Shadowing is arranged on-site with an experienced volunteer. From that point on, there will be someone available who can help support you and answer any questions you might have.

We will provide top-up training to fill gaps in your knowledge and skills. Staff or other volunteers will always be available if you need to offload any concerns after a day of volunteering.

Our onboarding process helps new volunteers become confident, informed, and ready to contribute safely and effectively.

Locations

Our offices are based in civil and family courts and university campuses across the country. Addresses for each service can be found on our website.



www.supportthroughcourt.org/locations



A TYPICAL PROCESS LOOKS LIKE

Stage	What happens
1.Application received	Acknowledge receipt of the application and explain the next steps.
2.Application review	Assess suitability against the role requirements. Reference checks.
3.Interview	Discuss the role, motivations, availability, and answer questions.
4.Reference checks	Obtain 2 references.
5.Offer of volunteering	Confirm acceptance. The service staff member will explain any conditions and provide a welcome pack and request IT to set up accounts. You will need to provide valid ID.
6.Complete paperwork	Provide Emergency Contact Information and read the volunteer handbook. Sign policy agreements including: • Personal Safety • Confidentiality and Safeguarding • Privacy Policy, Data Protection and Systems and IT • Equal opportunities • Guidance for volunteers
7.Induction	Half-day induction training will be provided to introduce the organisation, mission, values, policies, procedures, and key staff.



A TYPICAL PROCESS LOOKS LIKE

Stage	What happens
8. Mandatory training	Complete E-modules and familiarise yourself with common forms.
9. First-day role orientation	Office tour, demonstration of how to use IT and access our online platforms, and explanation of daily tasks and expectations.
10. Buddy or mentor support	Begin shadowing an experienced volunteer for up to 3 days.
11. Initial volunteering period	Begin volunteering with regular support and supervision.
12. Check-in review	Meet with supervisor within 4 weeks of your start date to discuss how things are going, answer questions, and address any concerns.
13. Ongoing support	Regular supervision provided, additional training and opportunities for development.



COMMITMENT

The minimum commitment is 2 days a month, or 4 half days. Opening times vary dependant on location but most services are open full-time Monday – Friday 9.30am - 4.30pm.

An Out-of-Hours Service will be piloted at the Online service from November 2026 for a 6-month period. For this period, out-of-hours volunteering will be available between 5pm – 8 pm on Thursdays. If you are interested in this shift, please contact the service staff at the Online Service.

Our aim is to offer a flexible volunteering opportunity designed to fit around work, study, family, and other commitments so you can choose shifts that suit your availability.

Please note the following when applying:

- Due to our local university partnerships, many services are only able to accept student applications through our university partners.
- During the application process we will ask for and check references, including information on any criminal record and suitability to work with vulnerable people.
- Please let the Service staff member for the service you are applying to know if you need a reasonable adjustment for a disability or significant health problem or are currently, or have recently been, involved in court proceedings.



FIND OUT MORE

You can find the application form through our website:

www.supportthroughcourt.org/get-involved/volunteer/service-volunteers/

Please contact the local Service Manager for the service you would like to volunteer at if you have any questions - these can be found at:

www.supportthroughcourt.org/locations/

Follow us on social media and tag, share and repost-away:

- o LinkedIn: Support Through Court
- o Instagram: @supporttcourt
- o X: @SupportTCourt