

# SAVTE

Creating community through conversation

## Sheffield Association for the Voluntary Teaching of English



Flags made by  
Conversation Group  
members in Gleadless



## Annual Report 2023-2024

# Welcome to SAVTE's annual report for 2023–24

We start with a huge thanks to our 146 volunteers, who continue to astound us with their commitment and dedication.

We couldn't do what we do without you – so THANK YOU!

Thanks also to all those who have helped and inspired us throughout the year: our staff and trustees, our partners and supporters.

We hope you enjoy reading this report, which contains a very few of the many stories of the people we have worked and learned with, and who together make up the story of SAVTE.

## SAVTE Volunteers, August 2023 – July 2024

Aarushi Chidambaram	Collin Clifton	Irene May	Linda Baxter	Saba Bano
Aisha Surti	Cora Lai	Irene Pugh	Lindie Billington White	Saba Samsoon
Alison Jane Moore	Cynthia Sutherland	Isabel Newman	Liz Griggs	Sabina Manzoor
Alison Mcmillan	Danny Gooch	Jack Dorward	Liz Wilsher	Samina Khan
Amina Saher	Darren Wake	Jane Clare Doyle	Mahboubeh Khajehsalehani	Sana Ibrahim
Amy Aumeer	Denise Annett	Jane Stanley	Mahmoud Ibrahim	Sarah Ross
Amy Nash	Denise Carter	Jean Cookson	Malcolm Reed	Sarah Sinclair
Aneela Khan	Diana Ridley	Jenny Fortune	Maria Cecilia Callirgos Baca	Sarah Zadik
Ann Blanchflower	Edward Symonds	Jim Dimond	Maria Koszler	Saskia Wilcox
Anna Gilyeat	Eleanor Clark	John Davies	Mariana Cordero Caballero	Shakirah Tahir
Anna Lomas	Elizabeth Buchanan	Joy Arnott	Mary Helme	Sham Haseen-Khan
Anne Shutt	Emily Hewitt	Judith Davies	Maya Kostova	Sharon Ghosh
Annie Yasmin Vohra	Emily Jones	Judith Watts	Michael Nelson	Sibongile Mupereki
Asma Aslam Jarwar	Emma Matthews	Julie-Ann Dixon	Mohammed Mustafa	Sozan Elhdad
Aysha Begum	Ewan Margrave	Juliette Foster	Nooh Almashehari	Stephanie Burke
Barbara Groves	Frances Morton	June Cattell	Nusrat Khalil	Steven Taylor
Ben Owen Smith	Frances Robertson	Karolina Borys	Pat Rogers	Sudir Narraido
Beth Cooper	Gay Horsfield	Kate Harrop	Patrick Moran	Sue Martindale
Beverley Brown	Glenn Birch	Kate McCullough	Paula Helder	Sue Stocks
Bryan Hopkins	Gordon Fyffe	Kate Pinder	Penny Simons	Temoor Iqbal
Carolyn George	Grace Collins	Kathleen Wallace	Peter Clarkson	Tony Tingle
Carys Mapleson	Graham Barkworth	Kay Kingsnorth	Radhia Eljazi	Trevor Goodfield
Cecilia Minter	Hadijah Hashimi	Kerrie Henderson	Raksmeythida (Mey) Oum	Xinyue Crystal Shao
Charmaine Myers	Hamed Davami	Khadija Yasin	Raphy Poon	Yasin Hersi
Chris Duggan	Heabo Mohammed	Kolsuma Noor	Rebecca O'Connell-Firth	Zainem Hussain
Chrissy Desforges	Hebah Alabbadi	Krishna Harish	Rebecca Spencer	Zaloo Ronneburg-
Clare Smith	Heike Becker	Lara Dyer	Rhiannon Price	Martarena
Clive Davies	Hendrika Stephens	Laurie Burrow	Richard Kingsnorth	Zubeda Khatib
Colin Havard	Hussain Salih	Lee Newell	Ros Tratt	
	Ian McHugh	Lesley Eva Browne	Rosemary Telfer	

## A message from our Patron **Lord David Blunkett**

My thanks and congratulations to everyone who has made such a contribution to the work of SAVTE over the last year. To staff, volunteers, and learners.

These are the three pillars that make for success, not merely in learning English, but turning round the lives of others and, in turn, finding reward and satisfaction in what is a two-way beneficial relationship.

We thought that the recent years had thrown up as much as was likely to happen in terms of the economic, social and political upheaval here and across the world. The last year, however, has demonstrated that just as you think it can't get any worse, it does.

At home, riots in the summer demonstrated how crucial it is to put the glue back into society, build social cohesion and an integrated society, build on our diversity and embrace cultures and enterprise from across the world.

But to communicate and come together we need a common language.

As Isabel, one of the volunteers, said: "we live in an unpredictable and, often, scary world, but volunteering and making a positive impact on someone else's life is honestly one of the best decisions I've ever made in my adult life".

Svitlana, one of the learners this year from Ukraine, described her conversation group as a "sanctuary" where "I feel safe, surrounded by friends who share a common interest in the English language".

They are testaments to an organisation that is giving so much, managing to do so on little resource, and yet playing an absolutely vital part in maintaining a sense of belonging, a common purpose, and a city worth living and working in.

# About us...

**Our learners** are at the centre of everything we do. Asylum seekers, refugees or members of diaspora communities are welcome to learn with us. We support them in their goals and learn alongside them.

**Our volunteers'** generosity and commitment is vital. Without them, we could not do what we do. We provide training and ongoing support so they can help others develop their skills and confidence, in conversation groups, online or in learners' own homes.

**Our communities** are stronger and richer when they are welcoming and inclusive. We work in and with communities across Sheffield, developing strong and enduring relationships and providing learning opportunities where our participants, and many of our volunteers, live.

**Our history** is a story of community and humanity, and demonstrates the best instincts of our city, welcoming people and supporting their integration. This simple belief in inclusiveness has guided us for more than 50 years, fostered our national reputation and built a solid foundation from which we continue to thrive.

**Our partners** share our commitment and values, and we work together in local communities, at city level and beyond to ensure that we can support people effectively. Many of our learners are referred to us through a wide range of partners and agencies, and we ensure that our partnerships collaborate towards a common goal.



**Our staff and trustees** are committed to our vision of a Sheffield where everyone is able to connect, participate and flourish. They have a wide range of skills and expertise, and value the principles that define what we do and how we operate: inclusively, with equity, openness, integrity and kindness.



**Volunteer Forum** We want to enable our volunteers to come together to share their experiences and ideas, and support each other. Clive, one of our volunteers and a trustee, writes:

*'I've been a Language Support Volunteer with SAVTE for about 7 years and a trustee for the last two. In that time, I've had a number of 1 to 1 placements as well as being involved with a few conversation groups. Two things have struck me over the years. The first is that being a volunteer can be quite lonely and, although we interact with learners and our Link Worker at SAVTE, we rarely get to meet other volunteers. Secondly, supporting English learning is difficult, and you need time to get ready for any session, both to plan what you want to achieve and then to pitch at the right level not to leave learners more confused than when they started. I'm keen to set up a chance for us to meet and to share ideas, material, anecdotes, successes and maybe even failures! It would also be great to support and encourage new Language Support Volunteers. I wasn't thinking of formal meetings. Small steps to begin with just to encourage get-togethers. A WhatsApp group, a coffee morning, an online forum or a session with maybe a short presentation are all things I would like to be involved with, and hope others would too.'*



If you are interested, please let us know - or look out for the new Volunteer Bulletin early in 2025!

# SAVTE stories

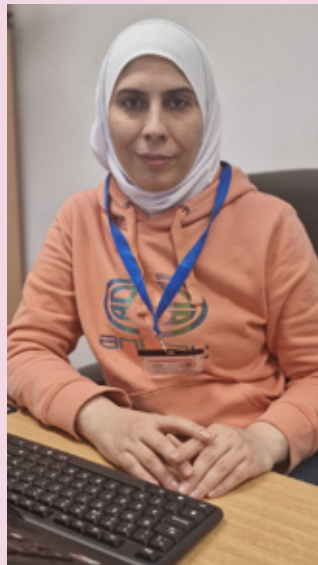
## Hamza

Hamza came to the UK from Syria in 2021 on a family reunion visa via Lebanon. He had pain in his legs so struggled to get out of the house. In Syria he was a skilled craftsman, specialising in marquetry. When he was referred to us in November 2022 he had not attended any classes in Sheffield and his English was very basic. His wife, Eman, was more fluent in English and was helping him a lot and his two daughters were already bilingual. Hamza's first 1 to 1 placement fell through as the volunteer had too far to travel and decided volunteering wasn't for him.

Another, more experienced volunteer, Clive, was paired with Hamza in July 2023, and the placement has been going really well ever since. The two have become good friends, meeting each other's families and have been out on trips such as to the former Little Mesters' Workshops in the Portland Works - of great interest to Hamza. The friendship is well-established and likely to continue beyond the placement.

On a separate note, Hamza's wife, Eman, is now an Office Volunteer with SAVTE.

Hamza's confidence has really grown. Recently he passed both his Driving Theory and Practical Tests. He has ambitions to start a woodworking business again and being able to drive will be of great help. He has started to get out of the house more, meeting friends and attending the mosque and the next step for him will be to attend a conversation group or ESOL class.



**Hamza says:** 'If I had to say one thing about SAVTE it would be that you are incredibly supportive and faithful to refugees and you have helped my family and I so much. Thank you.'



## Beverly

My learner is a refugee from Syria who came to the UK in January 2016 and is living in Sheffield with her husband and two young children. She was a primary school teacher in Syria. When she was first referred to SAVTE, she could read and write the latin alphabet and had a basic level of reading English words. However, she did not have much opportunity to practise speaking and listening and struggled with this, using translators in her everyday life in the UK.



In August 2022, I started my 1 to 1 placement with my learner. I was quick to identify that although she had a good level of reading and writing, she struggled to speak and to understand everyday English. Over the next few months, we focused on topics to help her practical needs, such as telling the time, shopping, making a GP appointment and understanding vocabulary relating to her children's attendance at nursery.

By applying a consistent approach, and through gentle encouragement over several months, my learner started to gain control of her own learning, and to actively request conversation practice rather than reading and writing. After several weeks of intense English sessions, focusing on the use and understanding of the Satnav and other driving vocabulary, my learner achieved a major milestone and passed her driving test in 2023.

At this point, my learner's confidence was continuing to grow. I encouraged and helped her to apply for an ESOL course at Sheffield College. At the end of her first year of study she passed the Entry Level 1 assessment and is now studying at Entry Level 2.

I have really enjoyed helping my learner to build her confidence in English. It has been a privilege to get to know her and her children and I look forward to our relationship continuing in the years to come.

# SAVTE

Creating community through conversation



## Weini

I came to England in January 2021 from Eritrea. When I came I couldn't speak anything, I couldn't read anything and I couldn't write anything, I had only one friend. I asked my Health Visitor if there was any class where I could improve my English and she told me about the conversation groups. She applied for me and then Salwa contacted me on Zoom and she said in my area there is a group at the Church and another at Terry Wright Hall.

I have made more friends, I feel more confident speaking and I've learned about some systems in the UK - I've met lots of different people from different countries. I get many benefits from the conversation group. I feel better because before I was always in my home, I only went to the shop.

## Zubeda

Teaching has always been my passion. When I learnt about SAVTE from my daughter, who was volunteering with the organisation, I did not hesitate.

I come from a multi-cultural background and am an immigrant myself. I speak English, Cantonese and Urdu. I have met many wonderful learners from various countries through my online sessions. Some of them speak good English, others struggle in expressing themselves. It is always nice to witness the progression.

A learner who used to be very quiet, eventually lost her inhibition and became quite vocal during sessions. There is also Harkesh, who has been attending my classes regularly for almost two years now. She said, "I've been living in the UK for more than 20 years but always felt shy speaking English because I struggle to express myself. Not anymore. I look forward to each session every Friday."

Harkesh is the first to give the correct answer to a question. She also helps newcomers to feel welcome in the group.



## Kerry

We are incredibly proud of our Community Link Worker, Kerry, who was officially recognised as a Churchill Fellow at an award ceremony in London this year. Back in 2019, Kerry was one of 1409 applicants for the Fellowship. After being shortlisted and attending an interview in London, Kerry was delighted to learn that she was one of only 141 successful candidates!

Though the COVID pandemic delayed her research for three years, Kerry finally embarked on her Fellowship last year. She travelled to San Francisco, California and Amsterdam, Netherlands, where she spent time with grassroots projects. There, she learned how the voluntary sector can work more productively with working-class communities to support refugee integration and help new neighbours feel truly at home.

The report of her journey and findings can be read here: <https://refugeeintegration.co.uk/>

Reflecting on her Fellowship experience, Kerry said "To have an organisation like the Churchill Fellowship



*believe and invest in something you're passionate about is one of the most confidence building experiences I have had. It has created a platform for me to share this much needed approach with others, and I'm excited to see it being embraced in my own workplace at SAVTE!"*

# Highlights of our achievements this year

## We have:

- Created and delivered a successful Ready for Work programme, supporting over 30 people towards volunteering, applying for a first job in the UK or working towards employment in their area of expertise.
- Gained Matrix re-accreditation endorsing the quality of our Information, Advice and Guidance processes.
- Secured increased Core Grant funding from Sheffield City Council until 2028.
- Maintained our role within the SPRING partnership, enabling us to consolidate our relationships with key organisations supporting refugees in the city.
- Consolidated SAVTE's reputation as a high quality provider of ESOL in the city through our successful tender for an Adult Skills Fund contract, enabling us to continue delivery of our classes in Sharrow, Burngreave and the City Centre and our volunteer training programme.
- Compiled a report for Healthwatch Sheffield on the experiences of refugees, asylum seekers and new arrivals seeking to access healthcare services.
- Undertaken a thorough review of our operational policies to ensure we are compliant with current legislation and, above all, that we have secure structures in place to keep people safe.
- Gained new funding from a range of trusts and foundations to sustain our development: Garfield Weston Foundation, South Yorkshire Community Foundation, JG Graves Charitable Trust, Coop Community Fund.



## Sarah Beardsmore, Trustee and Chair of the Board

I've been a trustee at SAVTE for six years, but over the last year I've seen the most change. In December, we said farewell to our longstanding CEO Stella Burton,

and in April Co-Chair Jo Reynolds moved on. Both have contributed a huge amount to SAVTE in recent years. In January, we welcomed Rob Hindle as our new CEO. Change brings fresh eyes, and it's been good for the trustees and staff team to revisit our vision and values over the last few months, as we work towards a new strategy for SAVTE. The strategy will sit alongside a robust funding plan, to help secure SAVTE's financial future, amidst an ever-changing funding landscape.

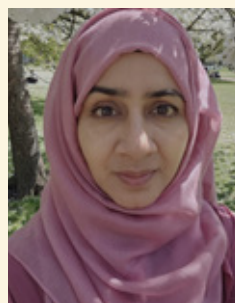
In this report you can read about the breadth of the English language learning offered through SAVTE, including our new course 'Ready for Work'. Across its 50 years, SAVTE has always responded to the needs of its learners. This year 1510 learners have accessed SAVTE support and each of their learning pathways has been designed to meet their individual needs. They have been supported by 146 volunteers and our brilliant staff team – none of what SAVTE does could be achieved without them.

Over the last year, the Board has enjoyed visits from staff members to the start of our meetings. We call it the 'impact' item on the agenda. The team shares the joys and challenges of their work and it puts the Board's agenda into the context of the activities of the organisation. I hope by reading the stories in this report, you'll see that our learners and volunteers are always at the heart of everything SAVTE does. It's a privilege to be a part of SAVTE.

## Mandy, Trustee

This has been my first year as a trustee of SAVTE. I joined at an exciting time in our development as we approach our 50th anniversary. It is an amazing achievement to continue to thrive despite the ever-increasing challenges of meeting community needs and financial pressures.

I am humbled by the commitment of a large number of volunteers who give their time to supporting learners of English and the enabling roles of our paid staff. I hope that we can develop the SAVTE model of facilitating participatory and collective learning through community conversations and actions that build on people's life experiences and contribute to inclusive and flourishing community life in Sheffield.



## Aaishah, Trustee

I started volunteering for SAVTE in 2021 and ran a very popular conversation group of 28 learners in Darnall, attended by mostly women from ethnically diverse backgrounds. I have worked as an ESOL and Family Learning tutor for Sheffield City Council for the last

3 years and have over 10 years experience in education. Born in the UK to Pakistani migrant parents, I am aware of the challenges migration presents and can understand the barriers to accessing English language support, being part of the community and achieving one's goals. I admire everything SAVTE stands for – everyone is so welcoming! So in 2023, I was delighted to take the next step to be a trustee and be part of its continued success and development as the hidden gem of Sheffield.



## Rob, Chief Executive

It was in a meeting in Sheffield Library, back in the summer, when I was reminded what a special organisation SAVTE is. I'd been asked to talk about what we do and how it works. I talked about how we began - including how Sheffield steelworkers helped their Yemeni colleagues to learn English to keep them safe at work. I said we train and support volunteers: people who want to give something to others, and to learn from others. Volunteers who welcome people, all people, into conversation groups, so they can grow connections and confidence, play their part, share their stories. Volunteers who meet people in their own homes, too, when their lives make it difficult for them to get out into their communities. (There were a few raised eyebrows at that: volunteers going into people's homes! We understand how important this is for some of our learners, though, so that's what we do.)

In recent years, we have seen education increasingly defined as a commodity, more about economic value than social and cultural wealth. In contrast, SAVTE's commitment to social justice and respect have ensured a recognition of the wider benefits of learning, in building confidence, increasing cultural awareness and understanding, improving wellbeing and strengthening community. This fosters a collaborative approach in which everyone is engaged. We hear every week from people who have learned with SAVTE, and who are really keen to tell us when they have taken their next step - got onto another course, started volunteering, started a new job. This is a real testimony to our values and commitment.

I was therefore delighted to be welcomed into the SAVTE community this year, to witness first hand both its outstanding practice and the regard in which it is held. I am confident that our remarkable story will continue to benefit our city, and I look forward to working with you all in the coming year.

## Kainat's Story

Kainat came to the UK from Pakistan in 2020 and moved alone to Sheffield in April 2023. She was referred to us for 1 to 1 support by Zest in November 2023. She is a young woman with no family in Sheffield and was very isolated when first assessed. She struggled to access a conversation group due to lack of confidence and social anxiety. Her spoken English was quite good, however, and she could get by with some simple reading and writing activities.

It was clear Kainat needed support to build her confidence. Link Worker Jo Heap liaised with Zest and Roshni about what they could also offer and a plan was agreed. Jo paired Kainat with a recently trained volunteer who was a student at Sheffield University. We knew that this would only be a 6 month placement as the volunteer would be leaving Sheffield in the summer. The placement went very well. In addition to offering Kainat support with her English classes, the two visited local landmarks as well as playing table tennis at the University TT club (Kainat had played competitively in Pakistan!) Slowly, Kainat began to come out of her shell. She had volunteered at Zest before and decided to return.

The placement ended in June 24. Kainat is now attending Entry 3 functional skills courses in English and maths at UMIX and volunteers in childcare at Xenia. She has recently been awarded refugee status and can now look for a job. She would like to work in childcare and would love to foster children. She is considering volunteering at her local school when her course finishes to give her experience.

*"My volunteer was so amazing, kind and such a nice person", Kainat said. "She took me around the city. I felt happy. She was also very well-spoken and clear. I am so happy now. My passion is to foster children in the future."*

*Zaloo says "It was amazing working with Kainat, an experience that I will never forget. From the first day I met her to our last lesson her confidence had improved so much, I am so proud of her. I'm really grateful for this opportunity and experience because I have also learnt a lot from her. Some of my highlights were showing Kainat around the city, going to parks and museums, as well as charity shopping! We had such a laugh and I really feel like I've made a friend. It was such a shame to leave but I am sure she'll be brilliant and achieve all of her aspirations!"*



## Rosemary, Trustee

I was pleased to rejoin SAVTE's trustee board early in 2024. I have been a volunteer with SAVTE for over 7 years, facilitating conversation groups. I am proud of the work the Association does for people who have come to live and work in the city. As a volunteer in a trustee role, I have found that being a member of a group of people actively steering SAVTE's development is a rewarding and, for me, challenging experience. Being able to contribute my experience as a conversation group volunteer is such a good feeling, as is sharing the planning and reviewing of our brilliant organisation with an experienced and knowledgeable team.

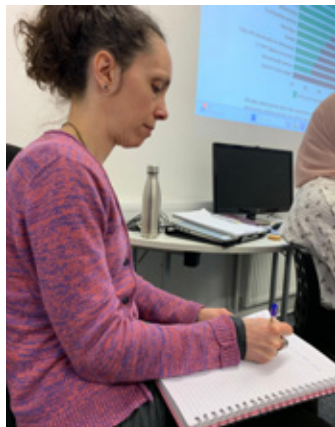
# SAVTE's Life in a Week...

It can feel like we experience the whole of life in a single week!  
Here is a snapshot of a typical week for some of us.

## Monday الإثنين

Isabella's day starts on a very positive note:

*"I go with one of our **One to One** volunteers, Mary, to visit Zobia at the end of her placement. Mary has been supporting Zobia for six months, at the end of which Zobia attended her first conversation group. Mary and I praise Zobia's persistent, determined approach and progress. Zobia and I thank Mary for consistently supporting and encouraging Zobia's English confidence to grow. Well done to both!"*



## talaadada Tuesday

Once a term on Tuesdays, VAS runs a **volunteering fair** which is a great opportunity for local organisations to talk to potential volunteers about what volunteering opportunities are available. It's a really successful event today: over 30 people register their interest with us!

Meanwhile, it is the final session of our **English Skills** course, 'My Life', at the City of Sanctuary. Learners give presentations about their interests and hobbies. One learner, Uğur, is a musician and he brings in his guitar, talks about his musical background and plays beautiful music for us. The session finishes with certificates and learners reflecting on their progress and achievements.



Katrin, meanwhile, is fielding calls and emails. *"A man phones on behalf of his wife. He tells me they live in Gleadless where his wife had recently joined him to live in the UK. They are both very keen for her to learn English. I tell him about the **conversation group** at Terry Wright Community Hall. He is really appreciative and thanks me for my time and help."*

Katrin has an email from a woman in her 70s keen to **volunteer**. She calls her and hears about her travels in Africa and her love for learning Swahili. She hopes to find a learner who she could help with learning English and they could help her to learn Swahili. Katrin encourages her to apply to volunteer with us. Later that week we receive her application and invite her in for a volunteer interview.

In the afternoon, she is going through a list of ESOL learners' names when one name pops out. She remembers a refugee who came to SAVTE through the **SPRING project** two years ago. *"I don't often get a sense of someone's journey of learning English with SAVTE, but here it is - from a complete beginner to now successfully completing a 10 week ESOL course. This is bringing a smile to my face."*



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stories that the volunteer is keen to share. It's also when conversations about learner progression take place and there's nothing more rewarding than hearing that a learner is ready to move on to a conversation group or ESOL class. It has to be the best part of the job."

Isabella, meanwhile, is busy interviewing four applicants for our upcoming 1 to 1 volunteer training course, including a part-time carer with plans to re-train as a teacher, a software engineer who speaks several languages and wants to share her passion for language learning, and an Adult Social Care worker who had recently hosted a family from Ukraine. "It is always a privilege to meet people from different walks of life who want to help people in our community to learn English", she says.



## Wednesday streda

Nuhu reports: "Our **Beginners English** group at **Utopia Theatre** has 14 participants in attendance (men and women). Introductions reveal there are eight different nationalities. There is a family from Gaza and four female learners from Afghanistan. They point out how grateful they are for the opportunity to attend the sessions where they learn English in a welcoming environment."



## Friday vendredi

As part of our ongoing commitment to **recruiting and training local volunteers** from areas where our learners live, we delivered a conversation group training course in September 2023 to volunteers from Lowedges Estate in partnership with the Terminus Initiative. The volunteers all support the same conversation group at 'The Michael Church' which runs every Friday in term time.

SAVTE is committed to staff and volunteer training and development. In November 2023, in partnership with the Council's Family and Community Learning Team, we arranged for Northern College to deliver the Level 3 'Award in Education and Training' course at the Snowdrop Building where SAVTE's offices are.

2 members of staff and 2 volunteers completed the course in February.



Our **Volunteer Training Courses** tend to be held on Wednesdays at various points throughout the year so this is a really important day of the week for us. Ensuring our new volunteers are fully equipped with all the skills needed to offer English Language support to their new learner is crucial if we are to offer them, and their learner, a mutually fulfilling and rewarding experience. As each course draws to a close, it's nice for the Link Workers to pop into class to get to know the new team and begin to plan for initial placement visits.

## Thursday جمعرات

**One to One Link Worker** Jo is out on the road, with assessments and placements the priority. "Link Workers work in tandem with one another, so it's great to catch up with colleagues on the team and bounce ideas whilst in the car or on the bus. For existing volunteers, Thursdays are also the day I try to conduct placement reviews that are due. These are a good way of keeping up to speed with how each placement is doing and to hear success

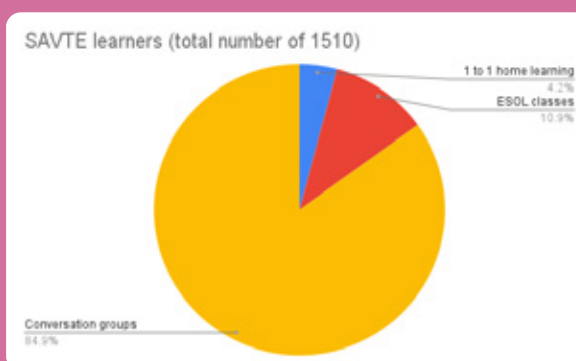
# Evidencing what we do

We aim to be fully accountable for everything we do.

## Facts and Figures for SAVTE 2023 to 2024

### Headlines

- 1510 learners
- 146 volunteers
- 69 volunteers trained
- 23 face to face conversation groups

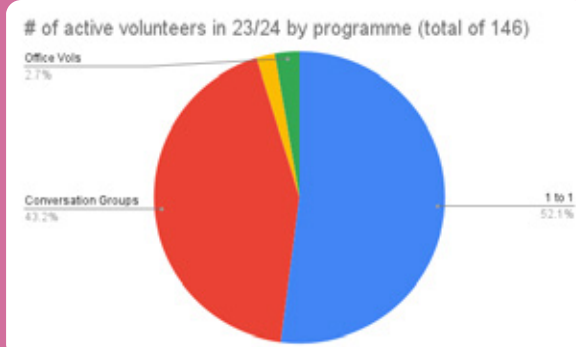


### Participants

- 63 people received one to one support
- 65 people accessed online learning
- 1217 people accessed conversation group learning in the community
- 165 people accessed our ESOL classes
- 59 people from the 1 to 1 programme reported improved confidence
- 73 people from the 1 to 1 programme reported increased activity in their local community
- 284 new arrivals received English language support in hotels

### Volunteers

- 69 volunteers trained to provide English language support
- 6 volunteers supported online conversation groups
- 49 volunteers provided conversation groups in the community
- 6 office volunteers supported

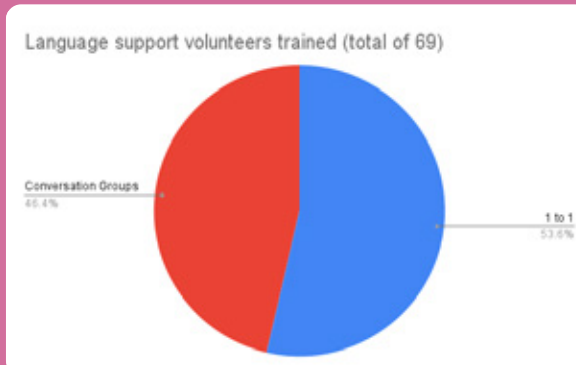


### Programme Support

- 416 telephone / email enquiries responded to
- 232 SPRING referrals processed
- 137 partner referrals from other agencies
- 151 volunteer applications

### Progression

- 30 1:1 participants progressed into group learning
- 85% of participants of volunteer training progressed into volunteering
- 165 ESOL class learners signposted to other provision
- 43 class learners into further education
- 15 class learners into volunteering
- 14 class learners into employment



# Spotlight on Delivery: English Skills – Ready for Work

This year we developed a new programme to support learners into work and volunteering. **English Skills – Ready for Work** supports learners to find that next step in education, volunteering or applying for a job in the UK. Many learners on the course have had to abandon their previous profession and are faced with the additional challenge of finding work in a different sector in the UK. In 2023 - 24 we ran this course 3 times, supporting 33 learners.

Close partnership working with **New Beginnings** has been essential to the success of the course. **Katy Pugh** gave a talk to each cohort about CVs and cover letters.

A highlight of the programme is the mock job interview, in which learners attend an appointment for a realistic job interview. Learners developed confidence and strategies to present themselves at interviews.

A fundamental part of the course is helping learners to plan their next steps. Link Worker Nuhu provides individualised IAG support for each learner and helps them find appropriate support. This might be signposting to local employment support, sending information about volunteering opportunities or referring to partner organisations.

**11 learners moved onto volunteering / 9 learners moved onto employment / 13 moved onto education or training such as courses with FACES or Sheffield College.**



## Taryar

Taryar attended the 'English Skills - Ready for Work programme' with SAVTE from January to March 2024 and says: "I had so much information from the course, and learnt things I honestly didn't know about before. I learned about CVs, about writing a cover letter. It was priceless for me."

Through determination and persistence, hard work and making the most of all opportunities Taryar has now found work and is closer to her long-term goal of being an accountant. Taryar received one-to-one IAG support from SAVTE when completing a number of job applications, and the course was timely in that she could apply the learning from the classroom whilst actively searching for work.

In recognition of her efforts on the course and all round determination which led to her finding work, Taryar was nominated and won the 'Learning for Work' award at the Lifelong Learning and Skills Learning celebration in June 2024 (pictured here with Lead Tutor Hazel).

## Ivan

"In April 2022, my family and I came to England, and I didn't know English well. I asked about English courses, and my sister told me about City of Sanctuary on Chapel Walk in Sheffield, a place that helps refugees like us.

When I arrived at the Sanctuary, a friendly volunteer helped me with translation and told me about SAVTE conversation groups. These classes were taught by Ian, Kathleen, and other volunteers. We also learned about online courses and the Friday conversation club from a Sanctuary volunteer. My wife and I joined these classes to learn English and meet people in similar situations.

Later, I learned about a new language learning class, the ESOL course, from SAVTE. We joined straight away, and it was a great decision. The course covered grammar, vocabulary, speaking, writing, listening, and reading. We received homework and always got useful feedback that improved our skills.

After the first course, we took the following courses focused on finding a job, and they helped us a lot. The best part is the teachers and organisers. They are friendly, professional, and make learning enjoyable. Thanks to Hazel, Nuhu, and the whole team. Thanks to these courses, I now have a job and can plan a better future for my family.

Thank you so much to SAVTE for your patience, hard work, and fantastic courses that have changed our lives!"

An experienced Engineer in Ukraine, Ivan came to the UK in April 2022. He joined SAVTE's conversation groups and then completed all three ESOL programmes in 22/23. His goal was to improve his English to continue working in his area of expertise.

Later in 2023, Ivan began actively looking for work and in September started SAVTE's English Skills - Ready for Work programme. He developed skills in writing applications and responding to interview questions. In November 2023, Ivan was successful at interview and started full time work as a Non-Destructive Testing Technician in Sheffield



# Our Financial Activities

For the period ended 31st July 2024

	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2024	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total 2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Incoming Resources</b>							
Donations	2,660	-	-	2,660	1,055	-	1,055
Charitable activities	111,780	-	286,978	398,758	145,649	214,268	359,917
Investment income - bank interest	4,441	-	-	4,441	1,256	-	1,256
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>	<b>118,881</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>286,978</b>	<b>405,859</b>	<b>147,960</b>	<b>214,268</b>	<b>362,228</b>
<b>Resources Expended</b>							
Charitable activities	141,136	46,136	234,653	421,925	82,573	276,837	359,410
<b>Total Expended Resources</b>	<b>141,136</b>	<b>46,136</b>	<b>234,653</b>	<b>421,925</b>	<b>82,573</b>	<b>276,837</b>	<b>359,410</b>
<b>Net income/ expenditure</b>	(22,255)	(46,136)	52,325	(16,066)	65,387	(62,569)	2,818
Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	(15,325)	15,325	-
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>(22,255)</b>	<b>(46,136)</b>	<b>52,325</b>	<b>(16,066)</b>	<b>50,062</b>	<b>(47,244)</b>	<b>2,818</b>
Total funds brought forward	251,883	46,136	53,634	351,653	247,957	100,878	348,835
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>229,628</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>105,959</b>	<b>335,587</b>	<b>298,019</b>	<b>53,634</b>	<b>351,653</b>

SAVTE secured an uplift of £24,702 from the Sheffield City Council Core Grant for the next 4 years.

Funding for SPRING project continuation from January to December 2025 secured income of £52,029 of direct costs and £3,121 of indirect costs.

New grants achieved from Garfield Weston Foundation £20,000, South Yorkshire Community Foundation £5,000, JG Graves Charitable Trust £3,000 and Co-op Community Fund £3159.

Contract income from Adults Skills Fund £13,000 more than budgeted.

Improved accounts payable to lengthen the accounts payable period.

Improved accounts receivable processes to speed up money received from customers.

## Kehinde, Treasurer

I have been a trustee and the Treasurer of SAVTE for over a year now and found my involvement interesting, especially interacting during board and finance meetings with co-trustees who have a diverse range of knowledge, skills and experience. The last year had its share of 'excitement' with the economic and business challenges a lot of organisations, including SAVTE, faced. Despite these, we were able to secure new funding, and uplift/renewal for some of the existing funds. We had to change our external examiner in the year and are quite happy to work with Seven Hills Accountants as our new external examiner.

I look forward to another year with SAVTE as Trustee collaborating to ensure we deliver on our goal of supporting learners in their journey to become better equipped for the bright future ahead.



# SAVTE at 50!

When we started looking into the long history of SAVTE, little did we know what rich stories we would find - let alone the possibility that our roots go back even beyond 1974! Here are a few of these stories, which - while some may be showing their age - demonstrate the principles that guide us today are firmly grounded in our origins.

Imagine, Mrs Smith, that you are having a nightmare. It's shopping day. The shops are selling unknown foods, the women around you are talking gibberish, and the coins and paper money in your purse mean nothing to you. Two days ago you were halfway across the world, warm, safe and secure. Now you're in Abbeydale Road on a chilly October Saturday and for all you know of it, you may as well be on the moon. To make matters worse, your dhoti and sari, colourful though they are, hardly keep out the cold - even with three jumpers on top. Strange men stare at you and your custom prevents you from telling them not to.

It could never happen to you, you say? Mrs Kalsoom Khan, who left Rawalpindi eight years ago to live in Sheffield, can laugh about it now - and talk about it in English: "One year after I arrived I went to town. I did not know how to stop a taxi. I made the wrong sign..." Soon after this, Kalsoom took her first English lesson, in a room above the playgroup attended by her children, with a group of other immigrant mothers. These makeshift classes were Kalsoom's first introduction to a voluntary group, now a registered charity, called the Sheffield Association for the Voluntary Teaching of English...

**Judy Johnson, 1973**



*"I have lived in England for eight years and have had a volunteer from the Distance Learning Project teach me English for six months... I want to be able to communicate with people and eventually to get a job... I have now started to speak in English at home and my children do not laugh at me so much. I am going to college this year to improve my English and am working towards a qualification with my volunteer."*

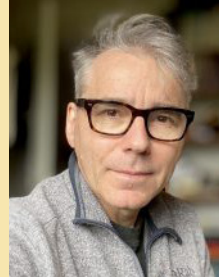
**Saeeda Begum, 1996**

My aims for the future are to help my student get to a level where she feels she is ready to go to college to further her English and I will support her during her course. ... My interest in other cultures has grown since I have been volunteering and I'm going to go to college to learn Urdu myself. This will help me to understand how difficult it is for someone who speaks Urdu to learn English and hopefully will put me in a better position to help others.

**Julie Sergeant, Volunteer, 1996**



## More SAVTE Trustees

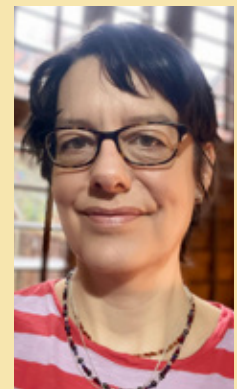


**Danny** joined SAVTE at the end of 2023 as a volunteer and a trustee. *"I retired earlier that year, after a career in IT, and I wanted to do my best to contribute to something both worthwhile, and different to anything I'd done before."*

*SAVTE is an organisation that I believe is doing essential and important work here in Sheffield.*

*I am an IT specialist and throughout my career I worked for a large, multi-national organisation. I hope that I can use my knowledge and experience to support SAVTE and its people to develop and grow."*

**Steph** became a trustee at the beginning of 2024, following a year of volunteering as a one-to-one language teacher. *"I was so impressed with the work that SAVTE does in our community and with how effectively it works with volunteers and learners, and I am thrilled to be able to support the charity as a trustee as well."*



*My working background is in publishing and teaching, and I currently work for an educational technology business. I am passionate about education, teaching and learning, and the opportunities and life skills that these provide for us all and for our communities."*



**Celine:** *"It has been an honour to have joined SAVTE during its anniversary year. It is an organisation with a rich local history that has changed the lives of thousands of people during its existence. The volunteers and staff have worked tirelessly this year to continue providing high-quality language support in Sheffield. Everyone at SAVTE has been incredibly welcoming, and I look forward to continue supporting SAVTE as a trustee."*

# Our plans for the future

This has been a year of transition and consolidation. Following the departure of Stella Burton after her six year tenure, which included the pandemic, Rob Hindle joined SAVTE as CEO in January. With significant changes in both the staff team and our trustees, our focus has been on building relationships, both internally and with our partners, and ensuring our processes and policies are robust and responsive while maintaining our extensive programme of English language support across the city. We have also embarked on a significant review of our strategy in order to establish a clear plan to take SAVTE forward confidently in a world which continues to change.

Fundamental to this will be our consultation with our whole SAVTE community - our learners, volunteers, staff, trustees, our community and citywide partners, and our funders. We want to work collectively to ensure that our way forward meets the needs of everyone we work with in a way which is consistent with our values and the vision we have for our city.



In embarking on this process, the decision was taken to pause the renaming of the organisation. We recognise the great work done so far in refreshing our identity, and you will have seen the new colours and design in our branding. However, the renaming of a long-established organisation is a significant step, and we want to ensure that this comes through the review process, in order to fully reflect the identity we have built together.

## In the year ahead, we plan to:

- Complete the consultation and review, and create a 5-year business plan to deliver our mission in accordance with our vision and values
- Develop our identity with a new website and social media presence
- Create a fundraising plan centred on the need for long-term sustainability
- Broaden opportunities for English language learning, social integration and confidence building by focusing on removing barriers to learning through the consolidation of our partnerships in the city
- Develop our distinctive approaches to maximise the impact of English language acquisition for our learners through emphasis on conversation and practical action
- Build on our offer to volunteers by strengthening our programme of support and development, creating a volunteer forum and improving communication through bulletins and informal meeting opportunities
- Make best use of our integral role in the city by working with key partners to influence the development of English language support which responds to the needs of our diverse learning community
- Continue to build a thriving and effective board of trustees to maximise the skills & expertise they bring
- Maintain our reputation for quality and integrity through successful delivery of our contracts
- Produce a publication, **SAVTE at 50**, bringing together the many stories of learners and volunteers to celebrate this important milestone and the significant contributions the diverse communities we have worked and learned with have made to the development of our city
- Continue to develop and support the staff team to have an emotionally safe space to reflect on their work and explore their personal and professional responses to it



## Some farewells...

In December, after 6 years of incredible devotion to SAVTE, we said goodbye to **Stella**. Although she said that 'at times, it hardly felt like work', knowing how vital it is to do what we do brings a sense of great responsibility to the role of CEO. Stella led SAVTE through the immense challenges of the pandemic with great integrity and compassion. She handed over to Rob in January - and we wish her the very best for adventures ahead!



ours to navigate the challenges charities face with confidence.

We also said farewell to several trustees: **Deborah, Patrice, Nina** and our Co-Chair **Jo Reynolds** (left). SAVTE is very fortunate to have the support of a strong and committed Board, and the wide range of skills they bring enable a small organisation like

# Acknowledgements

Huge thanks to our funding partners for their ongoing support of SAVTE's work:

**The National Lottery Community Fund, Sheffield City Council Voluntary Sector Grant Fund, South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority, UK Resettlement Scheme, European Union Asylum and Migration Impact Fund (AMIF), Sheffield City Council SPRING Project Funding, Garfield Weston Foundation, South Yorkshire Community Foundation, JG Graves Charitable Trust, Coop Community Fund, Healthwatch Sheffield, Voluntary Action Sheffield**

Thanks also to our incredibly committed **Board of Trustees** who bring a wide range of skills, experience and knowledge to the running and forward planning of SAVTE:

**Aaishah Aslam, Sarah Beardsmore, Stephanie Burke, Nina Cardinal** (retired April 2024), **Clive Davies, Celine Frohn, Danny Gooch, Deborah Hall** (retired September 2023), **Kehinde Obemeata, Patrice Panella** (retired December 2023) **Jo Reynolds** (retired April 2024), **Rosemary Telfer** and **Mandy Wilson**

## And to our fantastic Staff Team:

Operations Director **Jo Holliday**, Lead Tutor and Quality Manager **Hazel Leigh**, 1 to 1 Link Workers **Joanne Heap, Kay Kingsnorth, Faisal Muhrez, Isabella Shaw**, Community Link Workers **Kerry Cressey, Naomi Hinch, Nuhu Jallow** (SPRING Partnership Lead), Programme Support Team **Salwa Ahmed** and **Katrin Klosa**, Business and Finance Manager **Maymona Ghannam**, Marketing and Fundraising Manager **Polly Perkins**, Office Manager **Sharon Santhouse**, Chief Executive **Stella Burton** (to Dec 2023), Chief Executive **Rob Hindle** (from Jan 2024)



## Some reflections from our Staff

**Key:** I count myself as being so fortunate to have been given the opportunity to be part of such a caring organisation which puts learners at the heart of all it strives to do, and looks after volunteers and staff so well too. My day to day tasks and responsibilities are so varied: assessments and conversations with new learners and referrers; training our fabulous volunteers and supporting them as they begin their SAVTE journey; and, always very enjoyable, sharing tea and homemade baklava when on a home visit! "Success" may be measured in terms of someone's progression to college or even to a volunteering or paid role in the community; but it's great that "success" is also seen and celebrated when a learner is able to chat to a neighbour over the garden fence about the wonderful Sheffield weather, share a home cooked meal with someone they met at a conversation group or even catch a bus into town and know that "thanks love" is not a declaration of love from the bus driver but a friendly phrase used by many people in this diverse and friendly City of Sanctuary.

**Jo (a soon-to-be retiree):** I first became acquainted with SAVTE in the autumn of 2019 when I completed a 1 to 1 'Buddying' training course. Cerowyn, the tutor, was inspirational and, in the short space of a few sessions, convinced all of us novice volunteers of the vital work SAVTE was undertaking in the city, supporting refugees and asylum seekers.

For the past 2 years I have worked as a Link Worker, meeting learners from all over the world, living in all parts of our great city. Being one of the tutors on the volunteer training course has enabled me to utilise and enhance my teaching skills but also to forge links with new cohorts of volunteers who, like myself, wanted to make a difference to others whilst enriching their own lives. Hearing the success stories they share and watching as their learners progress to the next step makes it all worthwhile. Sometimes progression can simply be that the learner feels valued, that someone cares and they feel ready to face the challenges life throws at them. A hard-working, enthusiastic and creative staff, committed volunteers and a

wonderful community of learners - all of these parts of the jigsaw puzzle make SAVTE an amazing place to work. I shall miss it greatly. Here's to the next 50 years!

**Faisal:** Amid the bustling rhythms of the week, we proactively reach out to volunteers and partners, offering our unwavering support and lending a listening ear to their challenges and inquiries. This engagement is pivotal to ensuring that every process flows seamlessly, fostering an environment that is not only inclusive but also socially enriching and educationally transformative. This year marked a significant personal transition as I shifted from working within the 1 to 1 programme to focusing on community development. Through this evolution, I gained a profound appreciation for the extraordinary work SAVTE accomplishes daily. The impact of our collective efforts resonates deeply, affirming the value of our shared purpose.

There are more of our stories on our website. Please go to [www.savte.org.uk](http://www.savte.org.uk)

# SAVTE

Creating community through conversation

Connecting People  
and **Changing**  
**Lives** through **Local**  
**English Support**

## Refer to SAVTE

If you know someone who needs help with English and can't get access, refer them through our website

[www.savte.org.uk](http://www.savte.org.uk) or call us on **0114 212 3050**

## Volunteer with SAVTE

SAVTE introduces volunteers to learners and trains them to provide English language support.

Apply to volunteer via our website

[savte.org.uk/volunteering/](http://savte.org.uk/volunteering/)

## Partner with SAVTE

We welcome any opportunity to come and talk to your organisation about how we could work together

Email us at: [savte@savte.org.uk](mailto:savte@savte.org.uk)

# SAVTE

# .org.uk

Creating community  
through conversation

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PATRON: The Right Honourable The Lord Blunkett

