

# Welcome to the SAVTE Volunteer Newsletter!

In solidarity, we begin this edition by reflecting on what connects us as a community. We reflect on recent challenges and affirm what unites us: England belongs to all who live here, and Sheffield is home to a community that welcomes everyone.

In this edition: updates about our CEO, new expenses form, volunteer workshops, and conversation group packs. We also share volunteer stories, student contributions during the summer. Don't miss key dates and our "Your Say" survey.

Thank you for helping make SAVTE stronger.

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## **In Solidarity (from SAVTE)...**

We are, as individuals, communities and nations of people witnessing challenging and uncertain times.

What is in the news, what is happening around us is pushing the boundaries of our comfort and realities regarding interpretations and associations of some of our national symbols.

In SAVTE, we like to think and firmly believe that the England flag is a reminder to us all that ENGLAND belongs to all who live in it and who have made Sheffield their home.

We are all entitled to feel safe, welcomed and able to realise our full potential in one of the greenest cities in the world. We know the central role that English language skills play in creating community. This is why SAVTE exists.

## **DATES FOR YOUR DIARIES**

- **Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> Oct**  
1-1 language support training course starts.
- **Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> Nov** 'Next steps for your learners' volunteer workshop
- **Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> Nov** 'Healthy Conversations' volunteer workshop.
- **Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> Jan**  
1-1 language support training course starts.
- **Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> Jan**  
SAVTE AGM (Tbc)

## **Your Newsletter, Your Say!**

What would you like to see in the newsletter? Please tell us what you think using [this survey](#). Thanks!



SAVTE acknowledges and celebrates the invaluable contribution you all, our volunteers, make and continue to make in the realisation of our mission of delivering ESOL to those who need it most and can often feel afraid and vulnerable.



From all at SAVTE, we cannot thank you enough. We cannot do what we do and achieve the great results we have without your dedication, time and support.

## Update about **our CEO**



**Rob Hindle**

As we begin this new term, we want to thank you all for your commitment and continued support of our learners – whether in conversation groups, our 1-to-1 programme, or at the Drop-In at Victoria Hall.

Many of you may have seen that we are currently recruiting for a new CEO. This follows the retirement of our current CEO, Rob Hindle.

Since joining SAVTE in January 2024, Rob has made an immense contribution. He led a major strategic review, involving more than 80 learners and 30 volunteers, helping us identify and shape SAVTE's priorities for the future.

Beyond this important work, what we will miss most is Rob's kindness, compassion, and unwavering commitment to SAVTE's values. His thoughtful leadership has left a lasting impact on our organisation and community.

**On behalf of everyone at SAVTE, we thank Rob for his dedication and wish him every success and happiness in the future.**



**Rob with the SAVTE team at the picnic in July 2025**

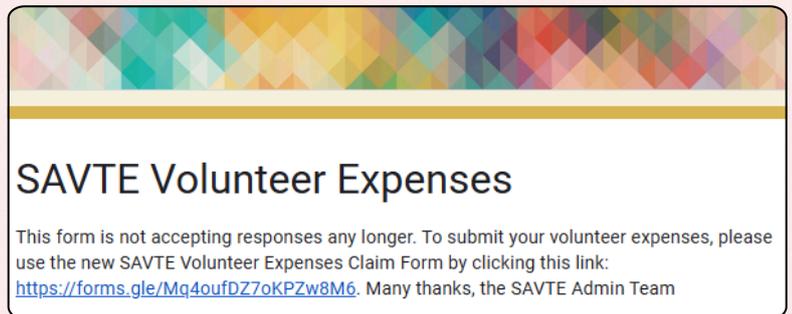
# Important Updates for All Volunteers

## 1- News from the SAVTE Admin Team - New Volunteer Expenses Claim Form

We have a new form for submitting volunteer expenses. Please use this form from now on [‘New Volunteer Expenses Claim Form’](#).

The old form will now be switched off. Please don't worry if you use the old form. You will see the following message and can click the link in the message to get to the new form:

**If you have any questions about claiming your expenses, please contact your Link Worker or [finance@savte.org.uk](mailto:finance@savte.org.uk).**



## 2- New Conversation Group resources!

We created three new Conversation Group packs over the summer:

- **Booking a GP Appointment**
- **Women's Health – Exploring Menopause**
- **Cost of Living Crisis**

Grace, one of our Conversation Group volunteers, came into the office to help Kerry create them – thank you, Grace! They are now available in our resource room. Please contact your link worker if you would like to use them with your group.



**Grace & Kerry**

**If you have some creative flair and would like to help us design more packs, do let us know – we would love to work with our volunteers to make this happen!**

### 3- Volunteer Workshops



We are planning to hold a series of workshops for volunteers throughout the year. Each workshop will include opportunities for discussion, sharing ideas for activities and exploring different resources.

#### **Tuesday 11th November 1:00-3:30 - 'Next steps for your learners'**

How do you talk about next learning steps with your learners?

Are some learners in your group interested in joining ESOL classes?

What options do they have across the city?

This interactive workshop will explore ways to talk about next steps with groups of learners. We will also look at specific resources around this topic and share sources of information about local opportunities.



#### **Thursday 27th November 1:00-3:30**

'Healthy Conversations' An interactive workshop looking at and identifying some of the barriers SAVTE learners might encounter accessing the healthcare system, and how volunteers can facilitate discussions around these topics in their groups. An opportunity to share existing resources and work together to develop new ones.

These workshops are primarily aimed at volunteers working with conversation groups, but open to all. January and February workshops will specifically be for volunteers working one-to-one.

**Workshops will be held at Castle Green (SAVTE office building).  
More information about the session and how to book coming soon.**

# Your stories

## • From Fear to Friendship: Awash's Journey of Learning English

When Awash first met her volunteer English teacher, Alison, she couldn't speak a single word of English and felt too afraid to go outside. Having never been to school and living with memory loss, she found learning and remembering new words extremely difficult. But Alison's warm, friendly, and patient approach made all the difference. Over time, Awash's confidence grew and she began to discover the joy of learning.

Week by week, Alison helped Awash learn simple English words and phrases. It wasn't always easy, but Alison never gave up — and neither did Awash. Together, they celebrated small wins that built into real progress. After just 12 months, Alison encouraged Awash to join a local Conversation Group. What began as a nervous first visit quickly turned into a highlight of the week. Awash enjoyed it so much that she and her husband began attending twice weekly, and soon she had the confidence to attend a third group all on her own.

Now, Awash proudly shares her knowledge in class — like the week the group practiced vocabulary about health and body parts, when her teacher praised her for knowing so many words. She beams with pride at her progress and loves learning the English names for the fruit and vegetables she grows in her garden.



Reflecting on her journey, Awash says: *"I have learnt a lot with Alison. She understands me, and she explains very well. Thanks to her, I know some words in English now! Alison has become part of our family."*



Awash garden

**Well done, Alison! Stories like Awash's remind us of the incredible power of volunteering. With just a little time, patience, and encouragement, volunteers can change someone's life — opening doors, building confidence, and creating friendships that last a lifetime.**

## • Hope in Every Lesson: Chol's Journey

Chol's story is another powerful reminder of the incredible difference one person can make when they give their time to teach and support someone in need.

When Liz Wood began tutoring Chol last October, she met a single mother of five who couldn't read letters from her children's schools. Isolated at home with a baby and struggling with her health, Chol felt overwhelmed and alone. But Liz brought more than literacy lessons — she brought hope, patience, and unwavering support.



Liz adapted lessons around crying babies, guided Chol through official letters, helped her fill in forms, and even supported her to secure a nursery place. She introduced the SAVTE Geobook, sent daily practice texts, and showed up week after week. Her dedication transformed not only Chol's literacy skills, but her confidence and wellbeing.

The results speak volumes: Chol now reads independently and attends conversation groups. In her own words: " *When I see my teacher Liz... I am happy. I don't feel sick anymore.*" At their final session, Chol's heartfelt message was simple yet powerful: " *Thank you so much. Good teacher, I love.*"

**Well done, Liz! This is the extraordinary impact of our volunteers. Through kindness, time, and commitment, they change lives — one lesson at a time.**

## Snapshots: Summer 2025

### • Meet Shivan

This summer, Shivan Vijay Menon, an Economics student at the University of Sheffield, joined SAVTE through the Students' Union's 100-hour internship scheme.

Shivan contributed through administrative and marketing work and joined conversation groups, gaining first-hand insight into the positive impact on English language learners. His main goal was to make SAVTE more engaging for students by tailoring volunteering opportunities to their needs and schedules —helping attract more volunteers and strengthen the programme.



Shivan

## • A Chat Over Coffee with Penny

This summer, Dareen, our Link Worker, enjoyed a warm chat over coffee with Penny Simons, one of SAVTE’s long-standing volunteers who has transformed the lives of many learners. Penny has been especially dedicated to supporting women for whom language was once a major barrier.



Penny & Dareen

With encouragement and persistence, these women have grown in confidence and become active members of the community. Penny’s work is a powerful example of how volunteers can make a real difference in creating connection and opportunity. A big thank you to Penny for her ongoing support and inspiration.

## • Staycation with SAVTE Spirit

During their annual leave, Nuhu and Dareen explored the beautiful Chatsworth House gardens and hiked to the Hunting Tower. Nuhu coined the perfect term for their approach: "Stay-cation with SAVTE spirit" — proving that annual leave can be refreshing while staying close to home and maintaining our community connections. Their adventure has inspired us to plan similar outings with volunteers in the future.



Dareen & Nuhu with friends and family

**We hope you enjoy this edition and look forward to bringing you the next one in February 2026. We'd love to hear your thoughts!**