

July 2026

Welcome to the SAVTE Volunteer Newsletter!

In this edition, we celebrate our volunteers, share the impact of our Conversation Groups, highlight new activities and events, and bring you the latest updates from across the SAVTE community.

Thank you for being part of our journey and helping to build stronger, more connected communities.

We hope you enjoy reading this edition and hearing about the difference we are making together.

• **Your Say – We Really Want to Hear From You**

This is **your newsletter** and **your organisation**,
so we want to know what you think.

What do you enjoy reading? What would you like to see more of?

Is there something we're missing? Is there something we could do better?

We'd love to hear your ideas, suggestions and feedback, whether it's positive, constructive, or somewhere in between. Your views help us understand what's working well and where we can improve, so that we can continue to support volunteers in ways that meet your needs and expectations.

Please take a few minutes to complete [our short survey](#). Every response is read and valued, and your feedback will help shape future newsletters and inform how SAVTE develops its work.



So don't be shy
tell us what you really think.
We'd love to hear from you!



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Dates For Your Diaries

• **Wednesday 8th July**
 Volunteer Information
 Event for new volunteers
 10:00 to 12pm

• **Invest in Stronger, More Connected Communities**

Dear Volunteers,

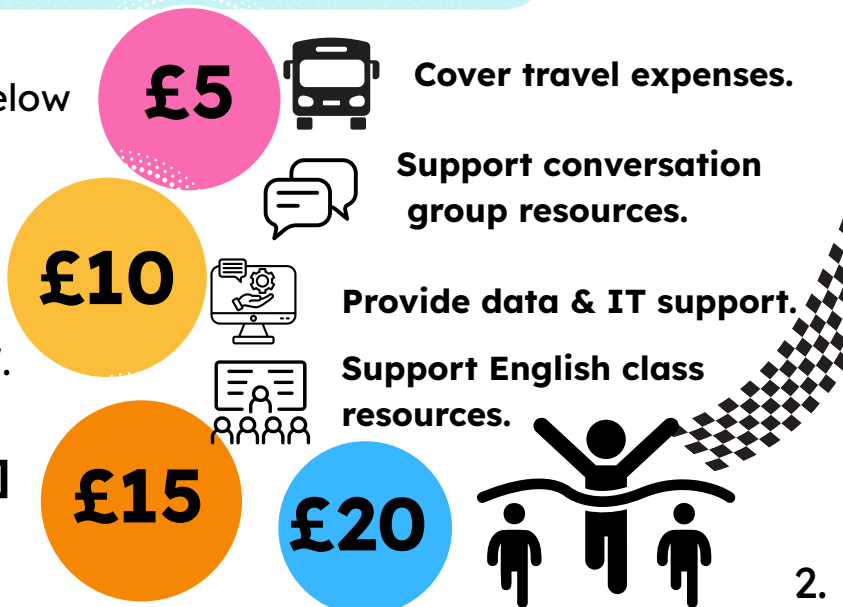
Every week, you give your time and energy to help someone in Sheffield learn English. You know how important this work is to break isolation in our communities.





To keep our groups running, buy resources, and cover travel costs, we need steady support. Today, we are launching the **SAVTE Regular Giving Fund**. We are asking if you can help us with a small monthly donation.

A regular monthly gift makes a huge difference.

If you can help, please click the link below to set up your secure monthly donation today; however, you can also choose to donate one time only by clicking on "One-off".

 [\[SAVTE Regular Giving Fund\]](#)



- £5**  Cover travel expenses.
- £10**  Support conversation group resources.
- £15**  Provide data & IT support.
- £20**  Support English class resources.

Want to support us for free? Use Easyfundraising!

If you can't give monthly right now, you can still raise money for SAVTE without spending an extra penny!

Whenever you shop online at brands like eBay, Tesco, Sainsbury's, Argos, or M&S, those companies (and many others) will donate a percentage of your spend to us for free.

How to do it:

1. Sign up for free at [SAVTE's Easyfundraising](#).
2. Shop online as normal through their app or website.
3. The brands donate to SAVTE at no extra cost to you!

Thank you for everything you do. Together, we are helping Sheffield communities connect, participate and flourish.

Please feel free to spread the word and encourage others to donate!
If you need this information on a paper flyer- please let us know!



• **Planning for the Future: SAVTE Trustees Meet**

While our volunteers are busy supporting learners across the city, another group of volunteers has been hard at work planning for SAVTE's future.

In May, all 11 of our trustees got together for a morning of lively discussion about where SAVTE is now and where we want to go next.

The conversation covered everything from leadership and organisational priorities to how we can make sure SAVTE continues to thrive for years to come.

One message stood out loud and clear:
people are at the heart of what we do.

We want to keep welcoming new volunteers into SAVTE and make sure everyone has access to training, support and opportunities to grow. We also want to create more ways for volunteers to get involved, share their skills and play an active part in shaping the organisation.

Trustees are volunteers too. They help guide SAVTE's direction, make sure we meet our responsibilities as a charity and support the work that makes such a difference to adult learners across our community.



SAVTE Trustees during the Trustees' Away Day

Could you be one of them?

We're always looking for people with different experiences, ideas and skills to join our Board of Trustees. If you'd like to help shape SAVTE's future, we'd love to hear from you.

• Measuring the Impact of Our Conversation Groups

A Huge Thank You to Our Conversation Group Volunteers

We have been gathering feedback from learners to find out how our Conversation Groups are supporting them and what difference they are making. Even at this early stage, the results are extremely encouraging.

More than **90%** of respondents told us that SAVTE has helped them improve their English. Many said they feel more confident speaking with neighbours, going out independently, and managing everyday tasks. Most importantly, the majority reported feeling more connected to their local community here in Sheffield.

While the statistics are impressive, it is our learners' own words that truly highlight the impact of the groups:

“SAVTE made me realise that I am not alone in this area and that many people like me are also getting support and learning together.”

“My confidence in speaking English was very low, but taking these classes boosted my confidence.”

“Thank you for your cooperation and assistance in our efforts to integrate into society.”

“Less lonely.”

“SAVTE and their mentors are doing a brilliant job.”



These comments reflect the confidence, connections, and sense of belonging that our Conversation Groups help to create.

None of this would be possible without our wonderful volunteers. Every session you attend, every conversation you encourage, and every learner you make feel welcome contributes to these positive outcomes.

**Thank you for your time, commitment, and kindness.
You are making a real difference.**



• Celebrating **Volunteers' Week 2026**

We celebrated Volunteers' Week at the beginning of June by sharing a range of inspiring stories from our volunteers. Each story highlights the dedication, impact, and passion that our volunteers bring to their roles.

To read more and discover these experiences in full, please visit our social media pages. Don't forget to follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn to stay up to date with our latest news, stories, and opportunities.



• Your stories

From Home to Community: Amina's Next Chapter

Amina has lived in Sheffield since 2012. But for a long time, life had narrowed to the walls of her home. Between caring for two young sons, her own mental health, and the absence of English-speaking spaces in her day, she described it simply: "Just cooking, cleaning. There's no speaking at home anyway."

She came to SAVTE wanting three things. "A more improved English class. Reading, writing, speaking." She was matched with volunteer Sue Clarke in January 2026, and Sue came to her home every Wednesday morning for four months.



Sue & Amina

What Sue built was not just a set of lessons. She created worksheets drawn from Amina's actual life: her children, her cooking, her sister's visit from India, the boiler breaking down. She kept the sessions low pressure, which mattered more than it might sound. Amina had been in a formal class before where she was pulled up for small mistakes. With Sue, the rule was simple: just write. And Amina did. She numbered every session's work and kept it all.

By the end of the placement, Sue could hold an ordinary conversation with Amina and she understood every word of it. Amina was also attending a ladies group, a walking group, an exercise group, and a computer class. None of that had been happening before. "Everything shared in the Bengali people," she had told us at the start. Not anymore.



Dareen, Sue & Amina

They ended the placement by exchanging plants, both of them keen growers. Amina received her SAVTE certificate and is now looking ahead to a conversation group.

A huge thank you to Sue for the patience, warmth, and genuine care she brought to this placement every week.

A Rewarding Journey with SAVTE: Chrissy's Story

Before joining SAVTE, I had a long career as a Modern Languages teacher, with a brief period teaching English to international students. After raising my three children, I took early retirement and later volunteered in food banks, where I met many asylum seekers. I was deeply moved by their isolation and hardship, but also by their resilience, warmth, and good humour. I began using my language skills to help me communicate with them, which was both humbling and rewarding.

It was during this time that I remembered my sister-in-law, then CEO of Voluntary Action Sheffield, speaking so positively about SAVTE. I decided to look it up, and was immediately inspired by SAVTE's origins in the 1980s, when people shared English language lessons in their own homes. I was keen to be involved.

SAVTE has enriched my life.



Chrissy

I thoroughly enjoyed the training course, which was both informative and enjoyable. I met my first learner in late 2024 a wonderfully brave woman from Iran with a delightful two-year-old son and a supportive husband. The experience was so positive that in July 2025 I took on a second placement with a single mother from Turkey caring for a severely disabled child. She is incredibly warm and enthusiastic, and her positivity is truly infectious.

Both placements have stretched and developed my teaching practice. With my first learner, I have had to adapt sessions to include her young son, who is often present. With my second learner, her eagerness means we sometimes move quickly, so we build in plenty of repetition to support learning.

I have grown very close to both learners, who are consistently welcoming and appreciative of the support. I am very glad I chose to take this rewarding and liberating path in teaching.

• Important Updates for All Volunteers

IMPORTANT

1- Conversation Group Weekly Attendance Online Registers

Hello friends both old and new.

Thanks for taking learners' weekly attendance and updating our online EXCEL registers. A gentle reminder to please keep your registers as up to date as possible every week to help SAVTE have an accurate picture of both demand and provision across the city.

Please do not reorganise the names on the online register in alphabetical order. This would help SAVTE gain a clearer understanding of the number of new learners added each month. If you are updating your register on an ipad or computer it is possible (even easier) to use the Control + F function to find a name (by typing a part of the name in the FIND box).



1. Press Control + F on the keyboard.
2. Enter the name or phone number you are looking for in the box that will appear at the top right hand corner of your screen and press Enter - this will bring up the name or close match.
3. When there are more than one options e.g. Mohammed - it will show you the number of finds. You can move through all the options by continuing to click on Enter on your keyboard.

If there is no find / matching details check spelling or record as a new comer to the sessions.

If you need support with updating and maintaining your Conversation Group Attendance Register please get in touch with your link worker in SAVTE.

2- Volunteer Handbook – New Access Arrangements

We are changing how volunteers access the Volunteer Handbook to ensure everyone is using the most up-to-date information.

Please use [the Volunteer Handbook folder link](#) to access the handbook. The link will take you to the SAVTE Volunteer Resources shared drive, where you will find the latest version of the Volunteer Handbook.

The folder also contains other important resources, including:

- Safeguarding contact information
- The expenses policy
- The expenses claim form

Please make sure you use this version of the handbook, as policies, procedures, and contact details may be updated from time to time.

Older versions of the Volunteer Handbook, which were previously shared with volunteers, will be disabled and will no longer be accessible.

Thank you for helping us ensure that everyone has access to the most current information.

3-Volunteer Information Event – Wed 8 July (10am–12pm)

We are holding a Volunteer Information Event for people interested in becoming SAVTE volunteers on Wednesday 8 July, 10am–12pm.

If you have friends, family members, or contacts who might be interested in volunteering, please encourage them to get in touch or attend the event.

Please help us spread the word.



• Snapshots: Spring - Summer 2026

Office Volunteers Meet SPRING Team

Our office volunteers Karen, Emine and Seham met with Abi and Olga from the SPRING project at our office.

During the meeting, Abi and Olga provided an update on the database system, which helps volunteers carry out their role in contacting learners and referring them to suitable English language provision. The session helped our volunteers better understand how the system supports their work and strengthened their knowledge of the SPRING project.

It was a fruitful and informative meeting, and we would like to thank our dedicated office volunteers for their continued support, as well as Abi and Olga for visiting our office and sharing their expertise.



Karen, Abi, Olga, Nuhu, Seham, Salwa & Emine

New Conversation Groups Launch in Tinsley and Burngreave

SAVTE is delighted to have launched two new English Conversation Groups in April 2026, helping to meet the growing demand for English language support in communities across Sheffield.

The new groups, based in Tinsley Community Centre and Burngreave Library, were established in response to clear local need and have been warmly welcomed by learners from their very first sessions.



Tinsley Community Centre CG

The Tinsley Conversation Group is led by dedicated SAVTE-trained volunteers **Lawrence and Anne**, who bring enthusiasm, encouragement and a passion for supporting learners on their language journey.

Held at Tinsley Community Centre, the group offers a welcoming space for learners of all levels.

Meanwhile, the Burngreave Library Conversation Group was developed through a partnership between **SAVTE** and **SOAR**. Led by SAVTE-trained volunteer **Richard**, who recently completed a degree in Linguistics, the group combines academic expertise with a genuine commitment to helping learners build confidence in English. Based in the familiar and accessible setting of Burngreave Library, the sessions have quickly become a valued community resource.

These new groups reflect SAVTE's ongoing commitment to making English language support accessible to everyone who needs it. **We are grateful to our volunteers, partners and learners for helping these groups get off to such a positive start.**



Burngreave Library CG

Bringing Volunteers Together

This term, SAVTE hosted a series of successful volunteer networking events, providing opportunities for volunteers to come together, share experiences and learn from one another.

The events provided a valuable opportunity for volunteers to connect, share experiences, exchange ideas and discuss the rewards and challenges of supporting learners across Sheffield.



Getting Together event



CG Coffee Morning event



1-1 Volunteers Coffee Morning

Feedback was very positive, with volunteers appreciating the chance to learn from one another and strengthen connections within the SAVTE volunteer community.

Welcoming New Volunteers

This term, SAVTE delivered two 1-to-1 Language Support Volunteer training courses and one Conversation Group Volunteer training course, equipping a new cohort of volunteers with the skills and confidence to support English language learners across Sheffield.



CG Volunteers



1-1 Volunteers



1-1 Volunteers

We are delighted to welcome our newest volunteers to the SAVTE community and thank them for choosing to share their time and talents. We look forward to supporting them as they begin making a positive difference in the lives of learners.

Digital Skills Workshops for Volunteers

Over the past few months, we have run two Digital Skills Workshops for our volunteers, bringing together both Conversation Group and 1:1 volunteers to explore practical digital skills that can support learners.



The workshops were a great opportunity to learn together, share experiences, and build confidence in using digital tools. Volunteers explored topics such as staying safe online, recognising scams, using helpful resources like Google Translate and BBC Learning English, and finding local information to support learners. We also discussed some of the digital challenges and opportunities that come up during group sessions and home visits.

Using their own smartphones, volunteers had the chance to try out tools firsthand, ask questions, and exchange ideas with others. No technical expertise was needed – just a willingness to explore and learn together.

Everyone received a resource pack and left with practical tips and ideas to take back to their sessions. Thank you to everyone who took part and helped make the workshops such a success.

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