



Volunteering for the Legion

FAQs

1. What do we know about the Legion's existing volunteer base?

The Legion's volunteering age range is extremely broad, spanning from 16-90 years, and we see this as a meaningful reflection of the strength and depth of support for the Armed Forces Community in this country. Our volunteers make an exceptional contribution to the success of the organisation and we would struggle to fulfil all of our welfare service obligations, or achieve our full fundraising potential, were it not for their continued support.

In terms of numbers:

- Welfare volunteers stand at approximately 3000.
- Fundraising volunteers (PAOs) stand at approximately 4000 but with volunteer collectors this figure runs well into 200,000+.
- Membership volunteers stand at approximately 13,000

Due to the extent of our ad hoc local fundraising volunteering, we do not hold sufficiently detailed data to give a precise average age profile but traditionally, many of the Legion's volunteer roles are particularly well suited to people who are retired or semi-retired and able to give their time on a flexible basis across the week.

2. Why is the Legion changing its range of volunteering roles?

Our volunteering work needs to change in order to align with, and to support, the larger organisational restructuring of the Legion currently taking place through its Pathway for Growth change programme.

The aim of Pathway to Growth is to make the Legion more visible, more relevant and more accessible to those members of the Armed Forces Community who may require help, advice and support at any stage of their lives. It also serves to reinforce our focus and commitment to support all four pillars of our mission - welfare, representation, Remembrance and comradeship – at both a national and a local level.

In terms of our welfare volunteers, we aim to introduce new Information volunteers who will assist beneficiaries visiting our walk-in Advice & Information Centres, and other community based locations. We also have Visitor volunteers and Volunteer Caseworkers. For the Caseworker role, the remit will be extended to carry out basic needs assessment for incoming new beneficiary cases and to upload casework information online. To undertake this revised role in the future, Volunteer Caseworkers will need to have a range of skills, including a basic working level of computer literacy.

For our fundraising activities, the range of volunteering roles has been expanded to offer more flexibility for volunteers to give their time during busy fundraising campaigns and we have also given further definition to some specific roles, (ie: drivers, organisers, collectors, banking and reconciliation) which are crucial components during the Poppy Appeal, or other major fundraising initiatives.

We have also developed a range of volunteer support functions, including Volunteer coordinator, office support, and community ambassador roles.



3. How have these new roles been identified?

These new roles have been developed following extensive discussions across our operational, membership and community fundraising teams as appropriate. These discussions have taken into consideration our current volunteer capability alongside the forecast future demands on the Legion, and the way that we will require volunteers to work with new operational systems and processes being introduced as part of the Pathway for Growth change programme.

4. Do you expect many changes to the Legion's volunteer profile once these new roles are introduced?

We expect an increase in the number of Legion volunteers, but more detailed figures have yet to be confirmed. Demand will be determined by the local Area teams and the County-based fundraising functions respectively, and recorded in the Volunteer Engagement plans that are produced for each of the 16 Area teams.

We value all the support we receive - irrespective of the age of the person providing that support. But as the scope of some of these volunteer roles changes we do expect to broaden the overall age, ethnic and social diversity of our volunteer base in order to better reflect the beneficiary and stakeholder audiences we are reaching out to. This is seen as a positive step.

5. Will any existing Volunteer Caseworkers be asked to stand down from their present roles?

We cannot confirm at this stage, as we have yet to carry out a full audit of our existing Volunteer Caseworkers in order to assess their ability to adapt to the requirements of the revised role. But it is true that if an existing Volunteer Caseworker does not meet these requirements and is either unwilling or unable to acquire them, they will be unable to remain in this specific role. This is not a reflection of how well they have performed the existing Volunteer Caseworker role to date, but a reflection of the additional demands of the new role.

In such an event however, we would not want to lose their support. Going forward, we would be keen to discuss with them the range of other equally valuable volunteer roles – both welfare and operationally based – that they might be willing to transfer to.

6. What are the new requirements of a Volunteer Caseworker?

The role of a Volunteer Caseworker requires strong interpersonal skills and a good working knowledge of welfare and social care. However it will now be an essential new requirement of the role to have some level of computer competency and literacy in order to be able to process new cases online and to access electronic case management records as part of the Legion's new ways of working.

7. If Volunteer Caseworkers don't have the skills required of the new role – but are willing to acquire them – will the Legion provide this training?

We wouldn't be able to provide this directly, but we would be able to recommend various sources of information and training in order to acquire the necessary level of computer competency required to undertake this role.



8. Will approved Volunteer Caseworkers need additional new training to continue in that role?

All new Volunteer Caseworkers will require some familiarisation training in the new case management systems and processes, as well as the new Legion Knowledge Base. This training will be provided at local level by the Area Information Team Leaders.

9. If Volunteers Caseworkers are stood down, how will their past contribution to the Legion be recognised?

Our Volunteer Caseworkers perform a vital role, and help to underpin local welfare service provision – a fact that we openly and readily acknowledge. However, we hope that any Volunteers unable to remain in this specific role, will maintain their commitment to the Legion and its work, and choose to transfer to another vital volunteering role in either operations or fundraising which is compatible with their skills and time commitment.

10. Will volunteers be asked to give a fixed time commitment in their new role?

The Legion is grateful for the commitment given by our volunteers on a regular basis, and for the most part we fully accept the need for flexibility in terms of when and how that help can be made available to us. This general approach will continue, however there are a few new operationally based volunteer roles that may need a more structured approach in terms of time commitment – in particular the Information volunteers who will have an active presence and role to play in the new Walk-in Area Advice & Information Centres. For these roles we may require an upfront commitment to honour certain hours of work.

During Poppy Appeal and other time specific fundraising activity (eg: London Marathon, special events etc), the Legion is happy to hear from people who are only available to help during this particular timeframe. Although the role of Poppy collector is critical to us at this time there are a number of other support roles available to those who would prefer not to participate in direct, public facing activity.

11. Will volunteers need to be DBS checked? If so, how long is that expected to take?

The role of Volunteer Caseworkers will require individuals to be checked/approved through this new process that replaces the former CRB approvals system. This is managed by the Area teams department with DBS. The process is fairly straightforward, though clearance timescales may vary depending on DBS capacity and workloads.

12. Do existing CRB checks remain valid for the time being?

They remain valid but on the date of their expiry, they would require DBS renewal.

13. Are any changes planned to volunteering policy, or processes?

The Legion's Volunteer Support Unit looks at ways to streamline policy and processes and any detailed suggestions or points of clarification should be made to them in the first instance. Work is in hand to simplify the volunteer expenses process with one simple form that all volunteers can use, and agreed timeframes for volunteer expense payments to be processed. Once finalised, these new systems will be communicated with all volunteers and local Area teams.



The Volunteer Support Unit is also responsible for developing an over-arching Volunteering Strategy for the Legion. This strategy will address the Legion's requirements across all four pillars and fundraising and provide a coherent framework against which the future volunteering needs of the organisation can be assessed and developed.

14. What role do the County and Branch teams play in the recruitment of new Legion volunteers?

The work of our membership is absolutely critical to the future success and wellbeing of the Legion and it is imperative that a strong and supportive bond is maintained between the Area offices and the County and Branch teams. A large proportion of our existing volunteer base are Legion members and it is the work and encouragement of the local County Chairs, County Secretaries and Branch Committee members that keeps this ongoing source of support alive at both a national and community level.

15. How will changes to volunteering activity be communicated across the Legion?

Communication needs to be interactive and collaborative at all levels of the Legion and will take the following forms, using the following channels.

- Regular consultation activity between the Legion and its existing volunteer base.
- Direct contact with volunteers via Area Managers or Community Fundraisers as appropriate.
- Regular liaison at area level between the Area Managers, County Secretaries, County Chairs and Community Fundraisers.
- Regular update briefings to the Membership Council and County Chairs for onward cascade as appropriate.
- Volunteer news and developments via TRBL's website, Legion magazine and other e-bulletins and newsletters.

16. Where can people find out more about the range of volunteering roles available across the Legion?

There are a number of ways to find out more. For general information, visit the Legion's website ([add link here](#)) or register your interest via Legionline ([add number here](#)).