

THE ROYAL BRITISH
LEGION

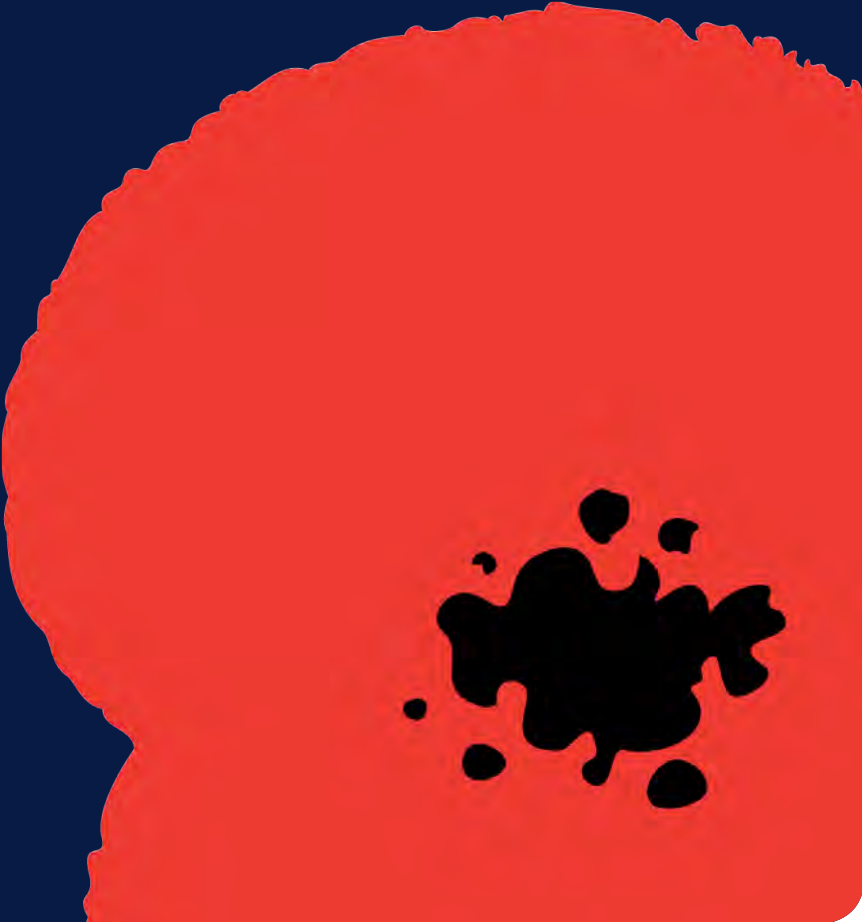


An Introduction to
Volunteering
for The Royal British Legion



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Welcome to The Royal British Legion

We are delighted you are thinking about volunteering for us at a time when our services are more in demand than ever. We are able to provide practical support and advice to thousands of Armed Forces personnel and their families each year, all thanks to the public's extraordinary generosity and the invaluable work of our volunteers and staff.

The Legion offers a whole range of enjoyable, fulfilling and worthwhile volunteering roles and seeks to build lasting productive partnerships between staff, volunteers and beneficiaries.

This booklet is designed to help you learn more about how you could play your part as a Legion volunteer. For newcomers to the Legion, it's a starting point to find out more before deciding to get involved. Existing volunteers and members may also find this booklet useful when considering further volunteering opportunities.

Whatever volunteering role you take on – whether you are involved with our work helping the Armed Forces community, helping to raise money for the Poppy Appeal, or supporting us in any other way – on behalf of the Legion and our beneficiaries thank you and welcome!



Volunteering with the Legion

To ensure our beneficiaries get the very best support, we select our volunteers very carefully.

Some roles will need people who are confident and competent at using computers; others the ability to connect with our beneficiaries quickly and easily; and others to help us raise much needed funds.

So for certain roles we may need people who have demonstrated a level of experience in some areas, while with others that wouldn't be necessary.

Whatever role you do, you can be sure that you will be making a really worthwhile contribution to support our Service men and women, past and present, and their families.

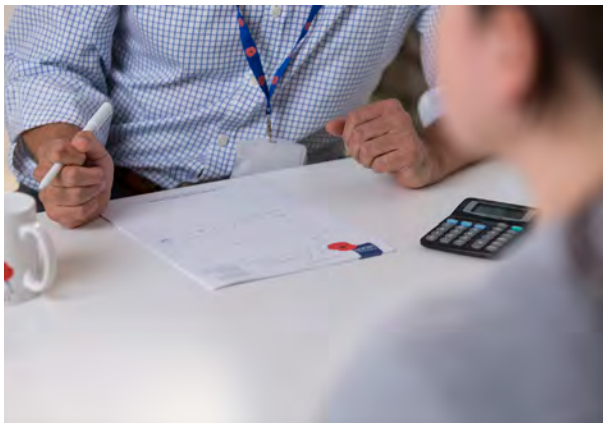


Volunteering with the Legion

What can you expect from us?

We recognise that volunteering is a two-way street, and that volunteers need to get something back from their experiences in the same way that the Legion gains from their time and effort. So we will, as far as possible, make sure you:

- Receive a clear written description of your volunteering role with us.
- Have an induction to the Legion, your role, and where you will be volunteering.
- Get training, support and supervision while you are volunteering with us.
- Are covered by insurance while volunteering for us.
- Are reimbursed for agreed out-of-pocket expenses.
- Are treated fairly, with dignity and respect.
- Get a regular flow of information updating you with what's happening in the Legion.



What we ask of you

In general terms we expect all of our volunteers to:

- Care about our beneficiaries and the Armed Forces community and be committed to upholding the Legion's vision, mission and values.
- Act with integrity and work together with other volunteers and staff, sharing knowledge and information with them when necessary and appropriate.
- Deal with people fairly whatever their background or circumstances.
- Attend briefings and training when required.
- Commit to helping us regularly, where a particular role requires it.
- Follow Legion policies and procedures.
- Tell us if volunteering for the Legion isn't working out as you hoped or expected, so that we can work together to find a solution.



Volunteering with the Legion

Where we need volunteers

There are two main areas where we need volunteer help:

1. Working with our beneficiaries
2. Raising the funds we need to help the Armed Forces community

On the following pages you can see many of our different volunteer roles, together with the corresponding skills and experience we need people to have.

Working with our beneficiaries

The volunteers who have direct contact with the people we help carry out critical work and must have certain skills and aptitudes. They are key to helping us deliver our welfare services, and work in close liaison with our Case Officers and other staff. There are three roles which are co-ordinated within our 16 operational Areas. These are: Information Volunteer,

Caseworker Volunteer and Visitor Volunteer. The Information Volunteer may be based at an Area Advice & Information Centre, or at secondary and outreach locations. The other roles are mainly delivered in the communities where beneficiaries are living. Some of these roles do require previous experience or IT skills so we may need to check those skills out before we can ask you to volunteer in a particular role.

What is a beneficiary?

Someone in the Armed Forces community who is eligible for our help. Beneficiaries include people currently serving in the Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force, Reservists, veterans of all ages, and close family members.



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Role Title	What do you have to do?	We need people who are...
Information Volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome visitors to the Area Advice & Information Centre or other locations that the Legion is working from • Give information to beneficiaries or direct them to more support from our systems or staff • Give basic information about the work of the Legion, its welfare services and membership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Happy and confident when meeting and talking to people from different backgrounds ✓ Good at customer service ✓ Confident and regular users of computers, the internet and email ✓ Happy working as part of a team ✓ Reliable and dependable ✓ Willing to help us regularly
Caseworker Volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact, visit and interview people who are asking for our help • Assess their eligibility, circumstances and needs • Keep accurate records of visits and assessments • Liaise closely with Area staff to help beneficiaries with agreed case actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Confident communicators ✓ Able to reassure people ✓ Able to assess objectively and remain neutral ✓ Regular users of email and the internet ✓ Willing to help us regularly ✓ Able to work independently and flexibly
Visitor Volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit beneficiaries in their home or hospital to offer befriending and comradeship • Help beneficiaries by giving them emotional support • Lend a non-judgemental and neutral ear to their situations • Signpost to further Legion support where necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Friendly and approachable ✓ Reliable and dependable ✓ Discreet ✓ Able to work on their own initiative ✓ Willing to keep in regular contact with beneficiaries to support them

Volunteering with the Legion

We also need:

Homes & Break Centre volunteers who help in our Care Homes and Break Centres, helping to run events and outings for residents, or just dropping in to have a chat with them. Our award winning care centres are found at various locations around the country – details are available on our website.

Specialist assistance for other areas of our work such as in the Home Improvement Service or The Battle Back Centre, Lilleshall. Any vacancies are listed on our website when they arise.



“ I have helped men and women, young and old, with a wide range of concerns and needs. I really feel that being a Caseworker means that I have a positive impact on people’s lives.”

Janine Woodward
Caseworker Volunteer



Volunteering with the Legion

Raising funds for us

We need to raise a considerable amount of money to deliver our welfare services and to carry out other charitable work needed to keep this great organisation working smoothly.

An army of volunteers is brought together to help during the Poppy Appeal, during the last week of October and the first two weeks of November each year, until Remembrance Sunday or 11 November, whichever is later.

Role Title	What do you have to do?	We need people who are...
Poppy Appeal Collector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be on the frontline of the Poppy Appeal by collecting in public places • Act as a visible reminder to the public about the importance of Remembrance • Be prepared to tell people what we do 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Able to represent the Legion and what we stand for ✓ Trustworthy and dependable ✓ Friendly and approachable
Poppy Appeal Organiser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-operate with staff and the local Legion Branch to plan collections in your locality • Ensure there are enough collectors for your locality • Organise a collecting rota • Brief collectors so they know what to do • Order poppies and other materials from Appeal headquarters • Arrange distribution of collecting tins, poppies and materials to shops and businesses • Collect, safeguard and promptly deposit money raised by the Poppy Appeal Collectors • Thank collectors and other Appeal volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Experienced at planning and co-ordinating people and materials ✓ Happy working as part of a team ✓ Confident when dealing with, and accounting for, money ✓ Able to get on well with other people in and outside the Legion and to build firm, productive relationships with them ✓ Confident and regular user of computers, the internet and email

Volunteering with the Legion

<p>Poppy Appeal Counting & Banking Volunteer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist Poppy Appeal Organiser by collecting, counting and promptly depositing money raised by the Poppy Appeal collectors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Happy working as part of a team ✓ Confident when dealing with, and accounting for, money ✓ Dependable and trustworthy
<p>Poppy Appeal Driver</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist Poppy Appeal Organiser by delivering collecting tins, poppies and Appeal materials to collectors, shops and businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Happy working as part of a team ✓ Dependable and trustworthy ✓ Able to drive, have a good driving record and with access to a car or suitable transport during the Appeal

We also need:

Fundraisers who can take part in all sorts of events organised throughout the year, such as the Pedal to Paris bike ride or the London Marathon. We are always looking for volunteers to take part and while the funds raised are vital for the Legion, these events are also a lot of fun and help people face personal challenges!

Legacy volunteers – In close co-operation with the Legacy team and Community Fundraisers, these volunteers raise awareness of, and actively promote, charitable giving to the Legion. They achieve this through organising and delivering a programme of legacy receptions, events, presentations and briefings.



“ I consider it an honour for me to be able to fill this role. I feel well supported and trained. If you have any problems with anything there is always someone who will give you guidance. It’s a very good organisation in that respect. I get pleasure at the thought of helping others.”

Derrick Morton
Volunteer Poppy Appeal Organiser

Volunteering with the Legion

In addition to our many welfare and fundraising roles, we welcome general and specialist help to support and publicise our mission to the Armed Forces community, and to assist in running membership activities. There are many locations around the country – in the 16

Area Offices or at Regional or Head Office – where administration support is greatly appreciated. In addition, we have created an Ambassador volunteer role to help raise our profile in schools and community groups across the country.

Role Title	What do you have to do?	We need people who are...
Office Support Volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the Area team by keeping computerised and paper records accurate and up to date • Help keep other office systems working efficiently • Keep our information safe and secure • Help plan and organise Legion events, booking locations, facilities, and contacting attendees • Support the co-ordination of volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Experienced at working in an office environment ✓ Good at customer service ✓ Confident and regular user of computers, the internet and email ✓ Happy working as part of a team ✓ Reliable and dependable ✓ Able to communicate clearly verbally and in writing ✓ Willing to help us regularly
Ambassador Volunteer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give presentations to schools and community groups about the Legion and its work • Develop and maintain a sound working knowledge of the activities of the Legion and of its mission and objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Organised ✓ Accomplished and confident communicator ✓ Reliable and dependable ✓ Willing to help us occasionally

Volunteering with the Legion

Volunteer Co-ordinator

- Help Area teams by maintaining accurate computerised and paper records
 - Maintain volunteer rotas
 - Organise recruitment and training events for volunteers
 - Support other volunteers by phone, through meetings, briefings, newsletters and email
- ✓ Organised
 - ✓ Experienced at working in an office environment
 - ✓ Reliable and dependable
 - ✓ Confident and regular user of computers, databases, internet and email
 - ✓ Happy working as part of a team
 - ✓ Able to communicate clearly in writing and verbally

We also need:

Membership Officers. We are one of the largest voluntary sector membership bodies in the UK. Becoming an active member assists us in our comradeship and Remembrance objectives, and there are many general and specialist membership roles available in all locations. These can be found in the Legion's Membership Handbook. To enquire about being a member or assisting with branch activities please go to our website or telephone **08457 725 725**.

If these volunteering roles don't appeal or fit with your personal circumstances, there could be other roles that you can help us with. Some of these are short term or one-offs where the time required is flexible and negotiable, or project-based volunteering that requires specialist skills. When these opportunities become available, we will advertise them on our website.



"This is what I want to do, it's about helping others and promoting the cause.

I've been a Caseworker Volunteer since 2007 and being an Office Support Volunteer is just an extension of that really. Its very straightforward as long you have good basic IT skills."

Andy Stephenson

Office Support Volunteer & Caseworker

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Becoming a volunteer

The process of becoming a volunteer with the Legion may differ according to each role, but generally follows these five easy stages:

Application

Fill out an application on paper, online at www.britishlegion.org.uk/support-us/volunteering or by phoning our hotline on **08457 725 725**.



Selection

We will review your application and invite you to have a chat with us about the role and what is needed.

Depending on the role, we may ask you to bring in proof of identity or ask you to take a short practical test.



Screening

UK law requires us to check people who work, or are likely to work, with children, young people or vulnerable adults, against certain national databases and registers. These checks are mandatory for Caseworker Volunteers before they start their training.

A previous criminal conviction does not necessarily prevent someone from becoming a volunteer – each case is dealt with individually and decisions made are at the discretion of the Legion.



Induction & Training

You will receive a thorough induction to the Legion and the role you have been selected for. This is mandatory before attending any further training.

The training is specific for each volunteering role and may include study packs, online learning, group training sessions and coaching.



Supervision & Support

We understand how important it is for volunteers to feel supported when carrying out their role. An identified individual will be responsible for providing that support and supervision. However, if you need to check something out, there's lots of information available online or by phone.

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Frequently asked questions

When can I start?

When we have received and started processing your application, we will contact you to let you know where you are in the process. We may invite you at that point to an open day or an informal chat. The amount of time it takes depends on the volunteering opportunities available in your area, which may differ according to local needs. If we have to screen you for the role that may delay things a little, but we try to complete that process as quickly as possible.

Do I need certain skills to be a Legion volunteer?

To help ensure our beneficiaries get the very best support, we select potential volunteers by looking at their previous experience and skills. Some roles will need people who are confident and competent at using computers, others the ability to get on well with our beneficiaries quickly and easily, and others to pass on information accurately.

Although you may wish to volunteer in a particular role, it may not always be possible to place you in it. This could be because there are no vacancies or that it is not the best role for you and the Legion. If this is the case, we will let you know.

Does the Legion provide training?

All volunteers receive free role-specific training that may include study packs, online learning, attending training sessions and/or coaching. You will also receive a thorough induction to the Legion and the role you have been selected for.

What support will I get as a Legion volunteer?

You will be supported and supervised throughout your involvement with the Legion by an identified member of our local team, who you can turn to for extra support if you feel you need it. If you need to check something out there is lots of information available online or by phone. We will work with you to help ensure that you find volunteering with us both challenging and rewarding.

How much time do I need to give and at what times can I volunteer?

There is no minimum time requirement to volunteer with the Legion, although for some roles it really helps if you can make a regular time commitment. Of course this is not binding, and you are free to change any agreed timings, or stop volunteering for us at any time.

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Although our offices are open during normal office hours, some volunteering roles require people on various days and times. In some areas volunteer training is provided at weekends and at others on weekdays. You will need to discuss the details with your local Legion contact.

Will volunteering for the Legion affect my allowances and benefits?

Some benefits are affected but others are not, such as the State Pension, Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit. If you are unsure we suggest you contact Job Centre Plus, or your local authority for further information.

What is the Legion's approach to diversity?

The Legion is keen to involve volunteers who reflect the diversity of the local community, and we welcome volunteers regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, disability, gender, sexual orientation, age or religion. We will not discriminate against volunteers on these grounds, and we expect the same approach from our volunteers themselves.

What if I encounter a problem?

In the unlikely event that a volunteer has a bad experience in their role, we have a formal procedure to deal with any issues. However we will always try to resolve complaints or grievances informally through discussion and mediation, before instigating formal complaints procedures.

Will I get paid expenses as a volunteer?

We will refund agreed out-of-pocket expenses incurred by you while you are volunteering for us. These expenses must be recorded and regularly submitted for reimbursement, with receipts. During your induction you will be made aware of how and what you can claim.

Am I covered by insurance when I volunteer for the Legion?

People carrying out agreed volunteering activities for the Legion are covered by our public liability and personal accident insurance. There are limitations to the personal accident cover for those under 16 and over 85 years, and the cover does not extend to people over 95 years. Therefore, we are unable to accept volunteers who fall outside these age limits. Unfortunately, it is not possible to insure people to use their

Volunteering with the Legion

own cars to volunteer for us because the cost is prohibitive. Most comprehensive insurance policies will include cover for volunteer roles under “domestic, business or pleasure”. If you intend to use your own car, please inform your insurance company before carrying out voluntary work on behalf of the Legion.

What happens next?

We will contact you as soon as possible after receiving your volunteer application. You can contact us by:

- Phone: **08457 725 725**
- Email: **volunteersupport@britishlegion.org.uk**
- Online: **www.britishlegion.org.uk/support-us/volunteering**



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Thank you!

Thank you for taking the time to read this booklet, and for your interest in volunteering with The Royal British Legion. We aim for all our volunteers to have a memorable experience in giving their time – an experience they will find friendly, fun and fulfilling.

The chances are you have the skills, experience, energy and enthusiasm we are looking for – it's just a question of channelling this into a role that's a best fit for both you and us. You've already taken the biggest step on your volunteering

pathway by expressing an interest in our volunteer roles, and we're standing by to help you transform that interest into a firm commitment.

There has never been a more exciting time to volunteer for The Royal British Legion.

Thanks again, and best of luck in all your future involvement with The Royal British Legion.



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