



Volunteers are the lifeblood of SSAFA, contributing in many ways to the support of our serving and veterans' communities, either with long established volunteer networks or through specialist schemes managed by Central Office.

### **Branch networks**

The branch network predominantly supports former members of the armed forces and their families, though it also helps those who are currently serving in cases where there are complex welfare and/or financial needs.

There are currently 92 branches with more than 5,000 volunteers, of whom some 4,200 are caseworkers. In the UK there is a branch in each county made up of divisions based on local authority boundaries; there are also branches in Cyprus, France, Germany and Ireland.

Most branches comprise a chairman, secretary, treasurer, fundraising organiser, publicity officer, training organiser, IT coordinator, division secretaries, caseworkers, friendship visitors and helpers.

The branch chairman is responsible to Council, through Chairman of Council, for all SSAFA activity in the branch area. The branch secretary is responsible for the routine operation of the branch and through division secretaries and caseworkers the 'almonising' of funds for clients. The branch treasurer is responsible for handling these funds and making payments that have been authorised by the secretary. To ensure financial probity treasurers cannot also be caseworkers and close relatives such as husband and wife teams cannot hold the posts of treasurer and secretary at the same time.

Caseworkers are trained volunteers who visit clients, assess their welfare needs and take action to ensure their needs are met. In some cases, the task is as simple as making sure they are claiming all the benefits to which they are entitled; in others it involves arranging grants from benevolent funds and other assistance providers. For eligible clients in financial difficulty caseworkers can often help with a wide range of welfare needs such as the provision of food, clothing, white goods, furniture, housing, training, employment, adapting homes for people with disabilities and arranging the provision of a mobility scooter. In many cases, though, the problem is not a financial one and can be solved by other means, such as signposting the client to a specialist organisation.

If you decide to join your local branch as a volunteer, you will normally be assigned to a local key lead, dependant on your role and supported by our Volunteer Experience and Learning and Development Team.

If you wish to view any of the role profiles or have any more questions, then please do not hesitate to contact me; [paula.harrison@ssafa.org.uk](mailto:paula.harrison@ssafa.org.uk).