

Leeds lawyers – we need you!

SBA The Solicitors' Charity is scouting for volunteer talent in Leeds

This is an excellent opportunity for you to help fellow solicitors in times of personal financial need. By volunteering as an SBA Area Representative, you can do much to make positive changes to those experiencing personal financial hardship. There are also advantages to you - here are some of them:

- Sense of achievement – You can witness lives improving directly from the benefit of your involvement
- Add experience on your CV – Studies carried out by [TimeBank](#) show 73% of employers hire people with a history of volunteering
- Expand your professional network – SBA's volunteer team is 70-strong and comprises current and former solicitors from every walk in legal life. In some areas, our volunteers work closely alongside local law societies to support their own legal communities.

Each Area Representative has their own reasons for volunteering but, whatever their motivation, they have two things in common: they all understand the pressures of life in the law and they want to make a difference by helping those who turn to SBA in times of need.

The role

The main function of our volunteers is to support SBA's application process by meeting applicants and beneficiaries on a one-to-one basis. These meetings usually take place in applicants' homes. Where needed, volunteers assist with completing the application form and verifying relevant underlying documentary evidence on our behalf. The Area Representative's report on their visit is critical in helping SBA assess the most effective way of providing help.

Ideal candidates

- Good communication and people skills are essential
- Volunteers need to be able to listen, empathise and gather information without judgement
- An understanding and commitment to confidentiality is fundamental, as too is a willingness to undertake refresher training in such areas as Data Protection

Though speed and flexibility are often needed when new cases arise, Area Representatives always retain the option to decline a case if it is not compatible with other demands on their time. Conversely, applicants are provided with advance notice of the person visiting on our behalf, to forestall any potential professional conflict. At present, volunteers typically cover 3 to 4 cases per year. Each case involves roughly four hours work. All reasonable travel expenses are reimbursed. We provide an in-depth induction for all new volunteers at our premises in Wandsworth and we have developed e-learning training in, for example, Data Protection.

To discuss opportunities for volunteering as an SBA Area Representative, please contact Sue Ellis or Dervilla Carroll at bensec@sba.org.uk T: 020 8675 6440. We'd be delighted to hear from you.

"My role as Area Representative is essentially one of facilitation – to support the information gathering and give each person's application the best chance of progressing. As an SBA volunteer, you're there to do a job and help people to find solutions for themselves, in a totally non-judgemental way. Because there, for the grace of God, go all of us."

Rhona Rowland, SBA Area Representative

