

A message from Nick Gallagher, CEO

Welcome to the PSU's newsletter for March 2017.

As we come to the end of our latest financial year we can reflect on a number of achievements.

Thanks to your support we have helped more people than ever before. By the end of March we expect that our volunteers will have provided help to people facing court alone on close to 55,000 occasions. This is a 20% increase on last year.

In this newsletter our Head of Service, Lizzie Iron, writes about our new services in Newport and Chester. These are examples of cost-effective ways in which we are extending our reach to more parts of the country.

Newport and Chester, along with West London Family Court and Bournemouth, are the four locations where we have started to provide a new service over the last 12 months. Southampton will be next.

We are also delighted to announce that, thanks to the generous support of the Legal Education Foundation, we have launched our new [website](#). It provides a more user-friendly and clearer source of information for clients, volunteers and supporters alike.

Finally, do take a look at our various upcoming events. Whether you want to challenge your body or broaden your mind we hope that they offer some enjoyable ways of supporting our work.

However you chose to express your support, thank you. We can't achieve what we do without it.



Nick Gallagher
CEO



Our upcoming events

Visit: www.thepsu.org.uk/events

Contact: events@thepsu.org.uk

Spring Raffle

Champagne, Afternoon tea and an iPad Mini are some of the fabulous prizes you could win. Tickets cost £2 each and are available until 21 March at your local PSU, or email friends@thepsu.org.uk to receive them by post.

Tough Mudder

29 April, Henley on Thames, 13 May, Belvoir Castle, Grantham, 9 September, Cholmondeley Castle, Cheshire
Test your toughness and take up the gauntlet against a range of muddy obstacles. A great time and extensive workout are guaranteed. Entry from £69.

Glorious! A Sumptuous Feast of Choral Excellence

6pm 23 March St Bride's Church, Fleet Street, London
The PSU are thrilled to announce that we will be partnering with Brandenburg Choral Festival of London. Tickets are £14, or £19 reserved seating.

Private Exhibition Tour of Sussex Modernism

6-8pm 20 April, Two Temple Place, London
Join the Friends of the PSU for an after-hours private 1 hour tour, drinks and canapes in one of London's hidden architectural gems. Tickets are £35.

Hadrian's Wall Trek,

7-9 July Challenge yourself to trek 25 miles one weekend along this remarkable Roman ruin with a stunning backdrop and history.



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How you helped Adrian when he came to court seeking contact with his child

A PSU volunteer explains: Adrian* had not been to the PSU before but turned up with his mother and asked if someone could attend a hearing with him. He had applied for a child contact order because the child's mother had stopped their previous arrangement.

He had no copy of his court forms. All he had was a report from social services and the letter giving the hearing time. We had 10 minutes before that deadline. During this brief spell, he explained that he was on the autistic spectrum and had reading difficulties due to dyslexia. Because of this, amongst other issues, he had failed to notice the requirement to submit a position statement.

As it turned out, the child's mother failed to attend the hearing so the magistrates adjourned. This gave the opportunity for Adrian to apologise to the court for the missing statement and he was given a new submission date.

The magistrates also asked if the PSU would be willing to help the client in view of his reading difficulties. Naturally, we said yes.

The court process and need to attend were extremely distressing for Adrian and even more so to face them alone.

It seemed to me that having a resource to guide him through the upcoming stages with both practical and emotional support exactly illustrated the value of the PSU service.

It is because of our supporters that Adrian did not have to be alone when he came to court. Thank you.

* Names changed to protect client confidentiality

How you can help:

Volunteer for us: The PSU's support for clients is delivered by our trained volunteers. If you can spare 2 days a month in 1 of our locations, we'd like to hear from you.

PSU opens satellite services in Newport and Chester

Much of our work is based in large city-centre courts, where we help clients hundreds of times every month. We know, however, that there are people in many smaller courts across the country where there is no PSU on-site, but who are just as desperate for help. When a group of judges heard about PSU Cardiff, they approached Cardiff Manager, Mabel, to set up a service in [Newport](#).

Conveniently located nearby, Newport is an ideal court for our new 'satellite' model, providing part-time services in smaller courts in a cost effective way. Mabel visited local agencies and quickly confirmed the need for a PSU service: with committed support from the judges and court manager, and with keen students from the University of South Wales, [PSU Newport](#) opened on Wednesday 7th September, and has been open every Wednesday since then.

The success of Newport encouraged PSU Liverpool Manager, Dave, to explore a similar service in [Chester](#): thanks to a generous donation from the University of Law in Chester, together with commitment from their students and PSU Liverpool volunteers, [PSU Chester](#) offers its free PSU service on Wednesdays and Fridays each week. The court re-scheduled its First Directions Hearings to Wednesdays, so that PSU volunteers can help litigants in person at those critical first hearings.

By Lizzie Iron, Head of Service



More clients can be helped.

Donate: Donate online, or by a cheque made payable to 'Court Based Personal Support'. PSU, Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, WC2A 2LL.