

A message from Nick Gallagher, CEO

It is the end of the summer and a start of the new academic year. It is also the start of a new 'season' for the PSU as we say goodbye to our Chair of Trustees, Robert Heslett and welcome his replacement, Peter Crisp, into the role. We owe a huge debt of thanks to Bob who has carefully guided the PSU at a time of great need for our services.

Under Bob's stewardship, the PSU has grown from helping people alone in court around 7,000 times a year to an expected 60,000 times this year.

Peter is retiring Dean and CEO of BPP University Law School and has been a trustee for several years. He will lead our hardworking Trustees in overseeing the PSU's strategy and direction in the years ahead.

You can read an address from our outgoing Chair and hear more about our achievements, and the people you have helped in our new Annual Report, which is available online at www.thepsu.org.uk

In this newsletter, you can read about the impact volunteers have and the new models of working we are trialling. This is all possible thanks to your support for people alone in court. The anxiety and stress for many of those we see is almost unbearable. Thanks to our donors, they have someone by their side; they feel more confident and able to participate fully in their case, increasing their chance of justice. Thank you.

Yours sincerely



Nick Gallagher
CEO



Our upcoming events

Visit: www.thepsu.org/events/social-events

Contact: events@thepsu.org.uk

Online Courts and how AI is affecting the Legal Sector

7.30-9am Salem Chapel, Leeds

Join Lord Justice Briggs as we look at technology in the courts. Tickets [online](#) or call Anna on 0113 246 7979.

#wearenotalone Corporate Challenge, 12 Oct, Leeds

Assemble your team of 5 Elite Super Lawyers and save the planet, completing a series of challenges and puzzles. Register [online](#) or call Anna on 0113 246 7979.

Friends thank you event, 15 Nov, London

Members of the PSU supporter group 'the Friends' are welcome to join us at the Royal Courts of Justice for drinks and a touch of magic. Friends can register [online](#) or contact Liana: 0207 073 1703 friends@thepsu.org.uk

If you would like to become a member of the **Friends of the PSU** please do contact us. You will be able to register for the Friends thank you and you will get early bird invitations on other great events. Register [online](#), or contact Liana: 0207 073 1703 friends@thepsu.org.uk

The London marathon, 22 Apr 2018, London

Would you like to take part in London's amazing 26.2-mile challenge and raise £1,800 for people facing court alone? Register your interest at events@thepsu.org.uk



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Connect with us on LinkedIn:
linkedin.com/company/the-personal-support-unit

Stephanie* a PSU client shares her experience

The PSU volunteers treated me with understanding and empathy, which gave me the courage to continue through the court processes. With their help, I gained a better understanding of what to expect and what was expected of me. Their support helped me to feel less daunted in court.

Having more confidence allowed me to present my case with clarity to the judges.

I was able to rely on the emotional support of the volunteers and their assistance in hearings and whilst preparing and waiting for hearings. They provided an unbiased and compassionate listening ear as I faced some of my most challenging times. They helped me to process my own experiences, thoughts and feelings, which helped me to write my personal statements with all the necessary details.

The complexities of our family issues meant our family court hearings took over 3 years however the support of the volunteers was undeterred.

The PSU office became a haven to me during my many days at court.

With their steadfast and consistent support and encouragement, I was able to navigate the court process and I now feel the best court result for my family has been achieved. I am indebted to the work of the PSU and the generosity of its volunteers and supporters.

*name changed for confidentiality reasons.



PSU staff and volunteers are ready to help in courts across England and Wales

Reaching more people: Outreach, satellite and phone services

The PSU has expanded rapidly in recent years, and in 2017-18 we will consolidate and prepare to face the future. Even so, we can't ignore the desperate plight of ever-increasing numbers of people needing help in court.

Traditionally, we provide full-time on-site services in larger court-buildings - which record 200 to 600 client-contacts per month; since the changes to legal aid, we have tried new ways to reach more people: in 2013 we started the London 'By Appointment' Service, where PSU volunteers attend scheduled hearings with clients at other London courts. This model has transferred very successfully to PSU Newcastle, where clients can book appointments for help in Kings Manor Tribunal, King Court Quays, Gateshead, North Shields, South Shields and Sunderland.

'Satellite' services represent another initiative, where existing PSUs provide part-time support in nearby court centres: these now operate in Newport (from Cardiff) and Chester (from Liverpool), with plans in hand for Barnet (from the Central Family Court) and Coventry (from Birmingham).

At PSU Exeter, a dedicated telephone service helps clients in remote, rural communities: time taken on that initial phone call can give someone invaluable hope and direction as they navigate the confusion of the court system. Also in the south west, our determined Manager, Amy, runs a 'two-centre' model, offering services in both Bournemouth and Southampton, thus extending our reach to twice as many people in the area.

As with all our services, these new models depend on endorsement by HMCTS, together with the dedication of our staff and the fantastic commitment of our volunteers, who join the PSU because they see a need, and are willing to give up their time to help people facing court alone. Our thanks go to every one of them!

Lizzie Iron, Head of Service at the PSU

How you can help: **Volunteer for us:** Become a volunteer and help the many people facing court alone. (www.thepsu.org/support/volunteer-for-us)

Donate: Donate online (www.thepsu.org/support/donate) or by a cheque made payable to 'Court Based Personal Support'.