

## **Cambridge and District Citizens Advice Bureau**

### **Volunteer Adviser**

Volunteers form an essential part of our charity and its role in the local area. The work can be challenging but also hugely rewarding. Problems faced by our clients which affect their lives cover a wide range of issues and can be complex. Citizens Advice empowers people by giving them impartial, confidential, relevant and factual information.

### **What will you do?**

As a volunteer Adviser your main responsibilities and duties will be to:

- talk to clients over the phone, face to face or respond to emails to explore what problems they've come for help with
- find information about the clients' problems (such as debt, housing, benefits) and help them understand their options
- support clients to take action to resolve their problems. This might include drafting or writing letters, making phone calls or referring the client to another organisation
- write a summary of the clients' problems and what action you've taken
- look out for problems that are common, or are unfair and write a short report which can be sent to your local MP, or local councillor

### **What do you need to have?**

You do not need specific qualifications but the role requires certain qualities and skills. You will need to:

- be friendly and approachable
- be non-judgemental and respect views, values and cultures that are different from your own
- have good listening skills
- have excellent written and spoken communication skills
- have good maths and IT skills
- be able to understand information and explain it to others
- be willing to learn about and follow the Citizens Advice aim, principles and policies, including confidentiality and data protection

### **What training is available and how much time does the role require?**

The role of Adviser requires a considerable commitment of time for initial and ongoing training and for working at the Bureau for one full day a week. We welcome enquiries about our Adviser volunteer training, but it is important that you understand what is expected.

We do not have specific course dates during the year but start a programme when we have enough people that can attend on a particular day. Due to the importance of providing accurate and appropriate information to our clients, an extensive training and assessment programme is provided. The Initial Induction training and assessment takes 4 weeks (a day a

week). After this induction training you will be able to start helping clients, over the telephone initially, which will help you to build up confidence and skills. There are also 16 online assessments, and additional half day specialist sessions covering key areas of Citizens Advice work, which must be completed before a certificate can be awarded. All volunteers are supported and their work is case-checked by supervisors throughout their time in the role.

Weekly time commitment: We ask for 8 hours per week **for at least twelve months**, which can be spread over two half days each week if you prefer. Citizens Advice Cambridge is open Monday - Friday 9.00 -4.00.

### **What's in it for you?**

You will:

- make a real difference to people's lives
- learn about a range of issues such as benefits, debt, employment and housing
- use and build on valuable skills such as communication, listening and problem solving
- work with a range of different people, independently and in a team
- have a positive impact on your community

### **Valuing inclusion and diversity**

Our volunteers come from a range of backgrounds. We value diversity and believe that a diverse team enables us to better understand and meet the needs of our clients.

### **What next?**

If you are interested in this role you can find out more about it here

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/support-us/volunteering/>

or you could contact Emma at Cambridge Citizens Advice for more information or to request an application form

[emmam@cambridgecab.org.uk](mailto:emmam@cambridgecab.org.uk)