

**citizens
advice**

Citizens Advice Sefton Volunteering Opportunities



WELCOME TO CITIZENS ADVICE SEFTON

Our aims

- **To provide the advice people need for the problems they face.**
- **To improve policies and practices that affect people's lives.**

Our principles

- **The Citizens Advice service provides free, independent and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination.**

Citizens Advice Sefton is a registered charity. In 2018/19 we helped 8,108 people with 32,156 problems. The main problem areas were benefits, debt, employment and housing. However, we provide advice on a wide range of other social welfare law enquiry areas including relationships and family, consumer, discrimination, law and rights, health and wellbeing.

Citizens Advice Sefton covers the entire borough of Sefton. We provide drop-in advice in Bootle, and Southport. We also provide a telephone Adviceline service and a Universal Credit Help to Claim service.

Advice outreach services are also available across Sefton

WHY VOLUNTEER FOR CITIZENS ADVICE SEFTON?

All sorts of people volunteer for many different reasons, but one thing that unites them all is that they find it challenging, rewarding and varied.

Volunteering provides an opportunity to learn new skills and to develop existing ones. For many people, the best thing about volunteering for Citizens Advice is getting to meet a wide range of people and make new friends. There is a real team spirit in each bureau office, and we provide a supportive environment to make sure that you get the most out of your time with us.

Some volunteer roles are more flexible than others. We will do our best to find a role for you that fits in with your interests. We ask you to commit to six hours per week volunteering at a time that suits you best. You will not be out of pocket, we will cover any travel costs incurred by volunteering.

You do not need specific qualifications or experience to volunteer as we provide free training, the extent of which is dependant upon the volunteering role you choose. The Citizens Advice gateway assessor and adviser training is respected and valued throughout the advice sector.

Citizens Advice Sefton is also a Skills For Justice Approved Training Centre. This enables us to provide our volunteers with the opportunity to undertake work-based accredited qualifications.

Above all, it's a chance to make a real difference. By volunteering for Citizens Advice Sefton you will be playing an active part in improving the lives of people in our community and influencing the development of national and local policies and services.

OUR VOLUNTEER ROLES

Citizens Advice Sefton have over 80 trained volunteers who support the delivery of our work across the borough. Our volunteers help us in a variety of ways.

Gateway Assessors (telephone and face to face)

Purpose of the role: To provide an effective and efficient triage service. They assess people's needs, either face-to-face or over the phone, and identify the most appropriate course of action. That might be self-help information, an appointment with a bureau adviser or caseworker, referral to a specialist organisation. As a gateway assessor you would:

- greet clients and explain the gateway assessment process
- explore the client's problem(s) and situation
- assess the risk/urgency of the client's issue and their ability to deal with the problem themselves
- identify the next step(s) that need to be taken
- summarise the content of the interview and explain what happens next
- type up a case record of the interview

Specific qualifications and experience are not required to train for the role. You need to:

- be good at listening
- be able to communicate effectively both orally and in writing
- have basic computing skills
- be open minded and non-judgemental
- have an understanding of, and commitment to confidentiality
- enjoy helping people

Generalist Advisers

Purpose of the role: to help provide an effective and efficient advice service to members of the public. Our generalist advice service looks at a client's situation holistically as opposed to looking at their problems in isolation from one another. As a generalist adviser you would:

- interview clients
- help them negotiate with people such as creditors or service providers
- draft letters
- make phone calls on their behalf
- complete benefit forms
- type up a case record of the interview

Specific qualifications and experience are not required to train for the role. You need to:

- be good at listening
- be able to communicate effectively both orally and in writing
- be open minded and non-judgemental
- have an understanding of, and commitment to confidentiality
- have basic computer skills
- be able to sift through information and extract what is relevant to the client's situation



Receptionists/Admin

Purpose of the role: Receptionist are an intergral part of the team, managing 'front of house' on the basis of information provided the Advice Session Supervisor. Depending on the size and resources of the bureau, the receptionist role may be undertaken by one or more people. As a receptionist you would:

- greet clients and other visitors
- answer the phone
- ensure clients know what is happening and how long they have to wait
- explain the services available
- direct clients to leaflets and self-help materials
- monitor client numbers and waiting times
- maintain the reception area
- enter information into the computer system

Specific qualifications and experience are not required to take on the role. You need to:

- have a good manner when talking to people
- have an understanding of, and commitment to, confidentiality
- be friendly and approachable
- be able to work as part of a team
- have basic computing skills

Research & Campaigning

Purpose of the role: By using evidence that Citizens Advice gets from our clients, you could help bring about changes in local and national policies and services which can benefit everyone - even those who have never used a local Citizens Advice before. As a campaigner you'll:

- fill out and gather evidence forms which explain the detail of what our clients come to us about
- find out and raise relevant issues in the local Citizens Advice
- help with research and the writing of reports
- get involved in media campaigning

Specific qualifications and experience are not required to take on the role. You need to:

- be able to work as part of a team
- have an understanding of, and commitment to, confidentiality
- have computing skills
- have good communication skills both written and oral

Trustee

Purpose of the role: the Trustee Board of Citizens Advice Sefton is collectively responsible for the governance of the bureau. Citizens Advice Sefton is a charity and a company limited by guarantee. Trustees play a valuable role by using their skills to help bring about positive changes in the community and to support the work bureaux do. Duties of Trustees include:

- planning bureau's overall strategic direction
- acting as employer to the paid staff
- managing the bureau's finances
- ensuring the bureau complies with the law
- responsible for premises, insurance and equipment

Citizens Advice Sefton welcome applications from people of all ages, backgrounds and experience to its trustee board. Meetings are held in the early evening every 6 weeks.

Application Process

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer at Citizens Advice Sefton you can find an application form on our website:

www.seftoncab.org.uk

If you need any further information please contact:

Linda Jones (Volunteer Development & Advice Services Manager)

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Citizens Advice Sefton

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