

Citizens Advice Sefton

Want to volunteer with us?



Welcome from 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 2022/23 we helped 5,446 people with 21,000 problems. The main problem areas were benefits, debt and housing. However, we provide advice on a wide range of other areas including relationships and family, consumer, discrimination, law and rights, health and wellbeing.

Citizens Advice Sefton covers the whole borough of Sefton. We provide face to face advice in our Advice Centres in Bootle, and Southport. We also provide a telephone Adviceline service.

Advice outreach services are also available across Sefton

Why volunteer for Citizens Advice Sefton?

Volunteering with us gives you an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of local people. 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.

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. **We ask you to commit to six hours per week volunteering at a time.**

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 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 and we will do our best to find a role for you that fits in with your interests. You will not be out of pocket, we will cover any travel costs from volunteering.

You do not need specific qualifications or experience to volunteer as we provide free training that is respected and valued throughout the advice sector. How much training you need depends on the volunteering role you choose.

Our Volunteer Roles

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

Advice Assistant/Initial Checker

What will you do?

- talk to clients face to face or over the phone, to explore what problems they've come for help with and identify the right level of support for them i.e. the 'next step'.
- write a summary of the clients' problems and what action you've taken on the Citizens Advice recording system, Casebook

Some examples of what you could do:

- find information online about applying for a benefit and show the client where they can access this for themselves
- signpost client to another organisation better suited to help them
- book an appointment for the client to see one of our generalist or specialist advisers to discuss their issue in greater depth

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

- be friendly and approachable
- be non-judgmental and respect views, values and cultures that are different to your own

- have good listening skills
- have excellent verbal and written communication skills
- have good IT skills
- be able to understand information and explain it to others
- be able to keep calm under pressure
- be willing to learn about and follow the Citizens Advice aims, principles and policies, including confidentiality and data protection
- be willing to undertake training in your role

Adviser (Face to Face and telephone)

The purpose of this role is 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:

- Talk to clients over the phone or face to face, to explore what problems they've come for help with.
- Assess a clients capability
- Find information about the clients' problems and help them to understand their options
- Support clients to take action to resolve their problems. This might include drafting or writing letters, making phonecalls or referring the client to another organisation.
- Complete benefit forms
- Type up a case record of the interview
- Look out for problems that are common, or are unfair, and record these as Research and Campaigning issues.

What do you need to have?

You don't need specific qualifications or skills but you'll need to:

- be friendly and approachable
- be non-judgmental and respect views, values and cultures that are different to your own
- have good listening skills
- have excellent verbal and written communication skills
- have good IT skills
- be able to understand information and explain it to others
- be willing to learn about and follow the Citizens Advice aims, principles and policies, including confidentiality and data protection
- be willing to undertake training in your role

Receptionists/Admin

Receptionists and admin are a really important part of our team, managing 'front of house' on the basis of information provided the Advice Session Supervisor. Depending on the size and resources of the Advice Centre, 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
- print and scan documents using a printer
- 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 good computing skills

Research and Campaigning

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! You'll do this by using information and evidence that we get from our clients.

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 written and verbal communication skills

Trustee

Our Trustee Board (CAS) is collectively responsible for the governance of Citizens Advice Sefton as a Charity and a company limited by guarantee. Trustees play an important and valuable role by using their skills to help bring about positive changes in the community and to support the work we do.

Duties of Trustees include:

- planning overall strategic direction for CAS
- acting as employer to paid staff
- managing CAS finances
- ensuring CAS complies with the law
- maintain an awareness of how CAS is operating
- read papers for board meetings
- work on specific projects with other trustees or staff to further our strategic objectives

Citizens Advice Sefton welcome applications from people of all ages, backgrounds and experience to our Trustee Board

IT Support Volunteers

- help staff and volunteers with day to day IT issues, for example, trouble logging on to their computer, connecting to Wi-Fi, finding files
- liaise with our IT Consultancy Service
- write instructions about how to do basic IT tasks to help volunteers and staff
- help update the local Citizens Advice website and other programmes as and when required

You don't need specific qualifications or skills but you'll need to:

- be friendly, patient and approachable
- respect views, values and cultures that are different to your own
- have good verbal and written communication skills
- have excellent IT skills
- be willing to learn about and follow the Citizens Advice aims, principles and policies, including confidentiality and data protection
- be willing to undertake training in your role

Our application process

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

<https://www.seftoncab.org.uk/>

If you need any further information on volunteer roles:

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

Or contact:

Linda Jones (Volunteer Development and Advice Services Manager)
Email: linda.jones@seftoncab.org.uk

Citizens Advice Sefton

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