



Citizens Advice St Albans District (CASTAD) Volunteer Adviser Role Description

Purpose of role:

- To help provide an effective and efficient advice service to members of the public.
- To help influence government and other organisations by informing them of the effect of their actions on the lives of clients.

Availability:

- We need you to be available to volunteer for 46 weeks a year and it is essential that you attend the Bureau on two days a week (and there will be additional home study during training periods).
- We ask for a minimum commitment of TWO YEARS to maintain the momentum of learning and so that you can get the most out of this volunteering opportunity.

Main duties and responsibilities:

- Assess clients' problem(s) using sensitive listening and questioning skills.
- Identify key information about the problem including time limits, key dates and any requirement for urgent advice or action (using the CitA Public Site and other diagnostic tools, as necessary).
- Identify and summarise the essence of the problem.
- Establish what the client wants.
- Assess and agree the appropriate level of service, taking into consideration the client's ability to take the next step themselves, the complexity of the problem and the bureau's resources, which may involve:
 - Advising the client on their options (using on-line research and the Session Supervisor)
 - Referring clients appropriately (both internally and externally) to suit clients' needs following agreed protocols, including making arrangements and informing clients of what to expect.
 - Signposting clients appropriately to suit their needs, following agreed protocols.
- Record information/advice given onto the PETRA case management system.

Discrimination:

- Identify if there is any question of discrimination.
- Be aware of the bureau procedures for dealing with actual and potential discrimination issues.

Social policy:

- Identify social policy issues.
- Assist with social policy work by providing information about clients' circumstances through the appropriate channel.

Professional development:

- Keep up to date with legislation, policies and procedures and undertake appropriate training for gateway assessment.
- Read relevant publications.
- Prepare for and attend supervision sessions / team meetings / staff meetings / external meetings as appropriate.

Administration:

- Use IT for record keeping.
- Ensure all work conforms to CASTAD's systems and procedures.

Reporting to: The Advice Services Manager

Personal skills and qualities needed:

- A commitment to the aims and principles of Citizens Advice including the Service's Equality & Diversity Policy.
- An understanding of equality and diversity issues and the willingness to examine and challenge own preconceptions.
- Respect for views, values and cultures that are different to own.
- Excellent communications skills.
- Being open and approachable.
- Ability to communicate clearly both orally and in writing.
- Ability to quickly sift through information and extract what is relevant.
- Basic mathematical skills, including percentages.
- An understanding of why confidentiality is important.
- Competence in using IT.
- A positive attitude to self-development and assessment.
- Ability to work as part of a team.
- Ability to recognise own limits and boundaries in the role.
- Flexibility and willingness to work as part of a team.

What you will gain by training to be an Adviser:

- Satisfaction of helping others
- Make a positive difference to your community
- Meet new people and make new friends
- Learn new skills and share existing ones
- Try something new and take on new challenges
- Build confidence and self esteem
- Enhance life and career plans
- Improve your employability

Your Professional Development:

- Attendance and participation at team meetings.
- Opportunities to attend relevant training as identified by the Advice Services Manager.
- Annual reviews.
- Employment references can be provided.