

Volunteer information pack

Thanks for your interest in finding out more about Citizens Advice Peterborough and volunteering with us.

This pack will give you more information about our volunteer roles and how to apply.

If you have any questions or need this pack in another format please email: volunteering@peterboroughcab.org.uk



**citizens
advice**

Peterborough

What does Citizens Advice do?



Citizens Advice gives independent, impartial, free and confidential information and advice to **help people overcome the problems they face**, such as benefits, debt, employment, housing, relationships and immigration.



We use our knowledge about our clients' problems to identify trends and campaign to **improve the policies and practices** that affect peoples' lives.



At Citizens Advice Peterborough we also have **specialist services** such as debt advice and outreaches in GP surgeries and libraries.



Citizens Advice Peterborough opened in 1967, and moved to its current premises in 1998. The service provides advice on a wide range of issues via drop-in assessments; pre-arranged appointments; telephone and email advice, outreach and home visits. During 2015/16, we helped nearly 10,000 people with more than 19,300 issues.

Why volunteer?

Our volunteers come from a range of backgrounds and communities and volunteer with us for a range reasons, including to:

- make a **positive impact on peoples' lives**,
- gain **new skills and knowledge** and build **experience** for employment
- use and develop **existing skills** in varied and rewarding roles
- improve **health, wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem**
- meet **new people** from a range of backgrounds and ages, and **make friends**
- get to know the local community and **give something back**
- experience **good training** and **support** and to feel part of a **team**

We reimburse travel expenses so you won't be out of pocket from volunteering.

Our roles

As a volunteer at Citizens Advice you don't need any specific qualifications or experience.



You'll need to be friendly and approachable and have a respect for views, values and cultures that are different to your own.



Some roles may require you to have a basic IT skills, be a good listener, or have good written skills.



As a volunteer you'll receive an introduction to the service and training for your role, as well as support and supervision from our supervisors during your time volunteering with us, and opportunities for development.



Many of our public-facing roles take place in the day time (Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm) but we can be flexible with some of our other roles, which you could do in the evening or weekends. **Have a look at the volunteer roles in this pack for more information.**

How to get involved:

- Read through our volunteer roles and decide which one(s) you're interested in.
- Complete a short application form: <https://www.citapeterborough.org.uk/expression-interest-form/>
- We'll invite you for an informal interview or occasionally an open day to discuss the role.

This is nothing to worry about, it's a chance for you to find out more about the role, and Citizens Advice Peterborough and decide if you'd like to volunteer with us.

It's also a chance for us to find out more about you and to see if the role you're interested in is a good fit for you.

Inclusive volunteering

- Citizens Advice believes that the skills, experience and satisfaction that come from **volunteering should be available to everyone.**
- We have a diverse workforce and **we actively encourage applications for volunteer roles from all parts of the community**, including Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) volunteers, disabled volunteers, volunteers with physical and mental health conditions, LGBT+ and non-binary volunteers.
- Citizens Advice has 4 network groups: 1) BAME, 2) Disability, 3) Lesbian Gay and Bisexual, and 4) Trans & Non-Binary, who raise awareness and promote inclusivity within Citizens Advice. The network groups also provide an opportunity to talk and support each other in a confidential environment.
- We encourage **inclusive volunteering** by focusing on matching volunteer roles available with your qualities, skills and interests. **We challenge discrimination, promote equality and value diversity.**

For more information see our [What you can expect from Citizens Advice](#) (see bottom of the page) and the Citizens Advice [equality and diversity policy](#).

Adviser



Our volunteer advisers talk to clients over the phone, face to face and online to explore what problems they've come for help with and find information about possible options. Advisers then help clients to understand the information, and support them to take action.

Some examples of what you could do:

- help a client with debts work out a reasonable amount to pay back, and make a phone call to an organisation they owe money to.
- explore what benefits a client is entitled to and help them to complete a benefit application form.



Time commitment: Two half day sessions a week, for 12 months. We can be flexible so come and talk to us.

For more information visit: <https://www.citapeterborough.org.uk/volunteer-with-us/>

I enjoy meeting and helping the clients by being there to listen to them and allowing them to offload their problems to someone who can help them and give the advice; overall, just being there to support people who need a listening ear.
Shilpa, Generalist Adviser

What's in it for you?

- Helping people directly
- Positive community impact
- Learning in depth about a few key issues such as benefits and debt
- Communication skills
- Increased employability
- Challenging and rewarding
- Full training given

Assessor



Our volunteer assessors talk to clients over the phone, face to face and online to explore what problems they've come for help with. Assessors find out information about the problem and help clients to understand this information.

Some examples of what you could do:

- find the information online that explains how to apply for Housing Benefit in a client's local area and explain it to them
- help a client find and understand what steps they can take to deal with their rent arrears



Time commitment: Two half day sessions per week, for 9 months. We can be flexible so come and talk to us.

For more information visit:

<https://www.citapeterborough.org.uk/volunteer-with-us/>

I've learned a lot about all aspects of the advice parameters like employment, benefits, consumer etc. I've also learned to think around the client's problem to help them realise various different avenues they can choose to take to help solve their problems. *Paul, Information Assessor*

What's in it for you?

- Helping people directly
- Positive community impact
- Learning about a range of issues such as benefits, debt, housing and employment
- Communication skills
- Increased employability
- Challenging and rewarding
- Full training given

Telephone & Digital Advice Volunteer



In this role you will be interviewing clients, on the telephone and by other channels, letting the client explain their enquiry and helping the client to set priorities.

Some of the things you might be doing include:

- Finding, interpreting and communicating the relevant information and exploring options and implications in order that the client can come to a decision
- Completing clear and accurate case records
- Recognising the root causes of problems and participating in taking appropriate action



Time commitment: Two half day sessions a week, for 6 months. We can be flexible so come and talk to us.

For more information visit:

<https://www.citapeterborough.org.uk/volunteer-with-us/>

I enjoy supporting people in their time of need to help them through their crisis I also enjoy providing directions to help people across all ages and backgrounds build their own skills and confidence to empower them to find information themselves via different channels. *Gurjit, Digital Adviser*

What's in it for you?

- Helping people directly
- Positive community impact
- Learning about benefits, debt
- Digital and communication skills
- Increased employability
- Challenging and rewarding
- Full training given

Fundraising volunteer



Each local Citizens Advice is a registered charity reliant on money from local authorities, companies, charitable trusts and individuals.

Fundraising volunteers may help with researching fundraising opportunities, writing funding applications, organising events, or creating materials or presentations that could be used at events to raise the profile of the local Citizens Advice and raise money.



Time commitment: We can be flexible about the time spent and how often you volunteer so come and talk to us.

For more information visit:

<https://www.citapeterborough.org.uk/volunteer-with-us/>

What's in it for you?

- Positive community impact
- Communication and fundraising skills
- Increased employability
- Challenging and rewarding
- Full training given

Research and Campaigns volunteer



Our research and campaigns volunteers identify trends in the problems experienced by our clients, to see where policies and practices are negatively affecting our clients.

Research and campaigns volunteers may do research, such as client surveys, to find out more about the issues, and then organise a campaign to bring about change. This might be writing a press release for the local paper, writing to an elected official like a local councillor, holding a public awareness raising event, or using social media.

Volunteers may also get involved in campaigns with national Citizens Advice, such as [Universal Credit](#).



Time commitment: We can be flexible about the time spent and how often you volunteer so come and talk to us.

For more information visit: <https://www.citapeterborough.org.uk/volunteer-with-us/>

I have learnt to adapt to a busy office setting, meeting and seeing new faces and getting to know people. I have also learnt how to work with little supervision which helps to make me more confident.
Aliyu, Research and Campaigns Assistant

What's in it for you?

- Positive community and wider impact
- Learning about issues with benefits, housing etc. and how they affect people
- Researching, communication and project skills
- Increased employability
- Challenging and rewarding

Advice Assistant *coming soon*

 Our volunteer advice assistants help clients face to face with specific problems.

Some examples of what you could do:

- complete an online or paper form with a client to help them claim a benefit
- call a utility company with, or on behalf, of a client, to find out how much money they owe
- discuss income and spending with a client and together draw up a personal budget

Time commitment: 6 hours per week spread over one or two days, for 6 months. We can be flexible so come and talk to us.



For more information visit: <https://www.citapeterborough.org.uk/volunteer-with-us/>

What's in it for you?

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Trustee



Citizens Advice Peterborough trustees are volunteers who use their skills, knowledge and experience to help guide and govern their local Citizens Advice.

This might involve making sure that the local Citizens Advice delivers high quality services, securing money to meet current and new demands, promoting the service locally and complies with the law around insurance, recruitment and premises.

Trustees work with the Chief Executive and other staff to shape strategy and give direction.



Time commitment: The Trustee Board meets six times per year in our central Peterborough office, there is also an Annual General Meeting that takes usually early Autumn. There are also sub-committee meetings at least quarterly. Talk to us to find out more!

For more information visit:

<https://www.citapeterborough.org.uk/volunteer-with-us/become-a-trustee/>

An example of one of our trustees is Kevin. He has held various positions within the technical departments and is currently Director of ICT for the Group. For a number of year's Kevin has undertaken volunteer work for various organisations with a host of successful charity fund raising events to his name. Kevin has been a trustee of CAP for nearly six years and was elected chair of trustees in 2018.

What's in it for you?

- Positive community impact
- Strategy and leadership skills
- Increased employability
- Challenging and rewarding

Ex-offenders

Citizens Advice have an ex-offenders policy to ensure that ex-offenders are treated fairly.

Having a criminal record is not in itself a barrier, and we will only take relevant convictions or sexual offences into account. We consider each offence individually, looking at issues like risk to the client, how long ago it took place, the circumstances and whether they are relevant to the volunteer role. Some roles may require DBS checks.

Anyone with a caution or conviction for a sexual offence against a child or vulnerable adult is considered unsuitable to volunteer.

We will ask about unspent convictions as part of the application process. If you're concerned or would like to discuss your individual circumstances further, please contact Helen Jones by emailing: volunteering@peterboroughcab.org.uk

Expenses

Expenses are paid for volunteers travel to and from Citizens Advice Peterborough on the day the volunteering takes place, and for any training courses. This includes parking.

So volunteering with us will not leave you out of pocket.

Only actual out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.

Email volunteering@peterboroughcab.org.uk if you have any questions about expenses.

Will volunteering affect my benefits?

Volunteers who receive benefits, including means-tested benefits, are allowed to volunteer.

You may need to notify the provider of the benefit (e.g. Jobcentre Plus or HMRC) about volunteering.

You will need to continue to meet the conditions of your benefits claim.

For more detailed information about specific benefits visit:

https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/support-us/volunteering/about-volunteering-with-citizens-advice/volunteering_faqs/

Come and join us!

To get involved, complete our application form

<https://www.citapeterborough.org.uk/expression-interest-form/>

Contact us on volunteering@peterboroughcab.org.uk if you'd like to:

- Discuss a role that you're interested in that isn't in this pack
- Discuss individual support or equipment needs
- Discuss flexibility around time commitment
- Discuss flexibility around what the role involves
- Find out more about the training
- Ask us any questions about volunteering!

We look forward to hearing from you!

