

Volunteers

at

Coventry Citizens Advice



Introduction from Simon Richards Chief Executive



Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Coventry Citizens Advice.

We are a free, independent, advice-giving charity.

Since our beginnings in the 1940's, volunteers have provided a major contribution to our work. In the current economic climate, we need volunteers as part of our essential service to the people of Coventry.

From fuel poverty to welfare benefits, housing issues to food vouchers, we give people the knowledge and confidence they need to find their way forward – whoever they are, and whatever their problem. For everyone, for over 85 years.

Our volunteers say volunteering with us is incredibly rewarding.

“I found the experience challenging and rewarding. It gave me an insight into the types of issues that people face on a daily basis, and what kinds of remedies are available to them. It feels rewarding to provide advice where it is clearly needed.”
(Diana, Volunteer Advisor)

Finally – thank you! We couldn't do our work without the support of people like you who are prepared to give their time to help others.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Simon Richards'.

A quick note from Marian Nelson, our Volunteer and Training Coordinator



Congratulations! You have taken the first step to finding out more about volunteering with Coventry Citizens Advice.

Please take a few minutes to read through this pack to understand the roles on offer and what we look for in our volunteers.

If you're interested in applying to volunteer with us the next step is to complete the application form on our website,

<https://www.coventrycitizensadvice.org.uk/volunteer/>.

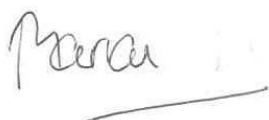
If you need more information email volunteering@coventrycab.org.uk.

All roles require an interview and varying lengths of training.

Training – Induction for all roles Induction face to face at our office in the city centre.

Training for the **adviser roles** Face to face training takes place in our offices in Foleshill, for 4 days. This will run alongside self-directed online training and shadowing existing advisors (when you're available) Mon – Fri.

Thank you for your interest and we look forward to receiving your application.



Coventry Citizens Advice at a glance

Our vision is to make society fairer. We do this one person at a time, helping people solve their individual problems and build resilience for the future.

Every year, we produce an Impact Report which gives an overview of the work we have done to help the clients of Coventry over the past 12 months. Here's some highlights of 2020-2021...



Top five benefits issues facing our clients were: (in descending order)

1	2	3	4	5
Benefits				
1	Universal Credit			
2	Personal Independence Payments			
3	Attendance Allowance			
4	Council Tax Support			
5	Employment Support Allowance			

Top five debt issues facing our clients were: (in descending order)

1	2	3	4	5
Debts				
1	Council Tax Arrears			
2	Credit Cards			
3	Fuel Debts			
4	Rent Arrears (social landlords)			
5	Water Debts			

People volunteer in the Energy team giving advice and information to aid people experiencing fuel poverty and in our ASK service which is the “front door” into the organisation for many clients who come with a range of needs from benefit and employment enquiries to housing and consumer issues. Volunteers also have roles supporting our corporate functions such as Finance.

In addition to the Energy and ASK team we have a number of projects which focus on particular communities in need. These include clients who are:

- Looking for support with debt issues
- Undergoing treatment for cancer
- Living with HIV or TB

Volunteer Roles

Volunteer Adviser

What does an Adviser do?

1. Explore a client's problem with them, research information to provide options, explanation and help with the choices and consequences the client faces.
2. Provide advice to clients over the phone, face to face and email.
3. Ensure where possible advice leads to positive outcomes for the client, enabling them to feel more confident to deal with their individual problems.
4. Refer clients internally within Coventry Citizens Advice services or signpost to other specialist agencies, the local authority, or partners as appropriate.
5. Maintain detailed case records and financial and non-financial outcomes using our case recoding system, Casebook system.

What qualities do we look for?

- Passionate about helping people
- Good at building a rapport with others
- Sensitive to other people's needs
- An ability to treat all people with respect and in a non-judgemental manner.
- Logical and methodical with a natural inclination to detail
- Numerate
- Excellent communication skills both verbal and in writing.
- Working knowledge of Office 365, particularly Microsoft Word and Outlook and a willingness to learn new systems as required.
- The ability to research information using reputable sources.

Time commitment

- The time commitment for this role is one day per week, or flexibly to be split into two half day and time for home learning especially during the initial training period. We ask for a minimum of a year's commitment to volunteering due to the time it takes to train as a Volunteer Advisor.

Disability

Coventry Citizens Advice is committed to disabled people volunteering.

If you consider that you have a disability under the Equality Act 2020 and require any reasonable adjustments to be made in the recruitment process or volunteering subsequently if appointed, please make sure you tell us separately. We follow the social model of disability which believes that it is the barriers created by society which disable people. We will use reasonable adjustments wherever possible to remove those barriers.

Diversity Monitoring

We recognise the benefits of having a diverse workforce and will take steps to ensure this. If you would like to see our Equality and Diversity policy then please let us know and we will provide you with a copy.

GDPR – How we will use your information

We will use your application only to inform the selection process - this is our 'legitimate interest' under data protection law. Your application will be kept on record for 12 months after which we will destroy it. If you are successful, it will form the basis of your volunteer record with us. We will hold any data about you in completely secure conditions with restricted access.

We shall consider that by submitting the application form you are giving your consent to the processing of your data in the ways described above.

Travel Expenses

We do not pay for volunteer interview expenses. However, we may reimburse candidates on a means tested benefits for reasonable travel expenses to attend an interview if prior authorisation has been obtained. Once you are a volunteer you can claim reasonable travel expenses.

Conditions regarding offers of volunteering

If you are successful and are offered a volunteer role, we will offer this to you on condition of the receipt of two satisfactory references. One of these should be someone who knows you in a work related, voluntary or academic capacity. Both referees should be able to comment on your suitability for the post applied for.

**Thank you for taking the time to read this information
pack
and we look forward to receiving your application.**