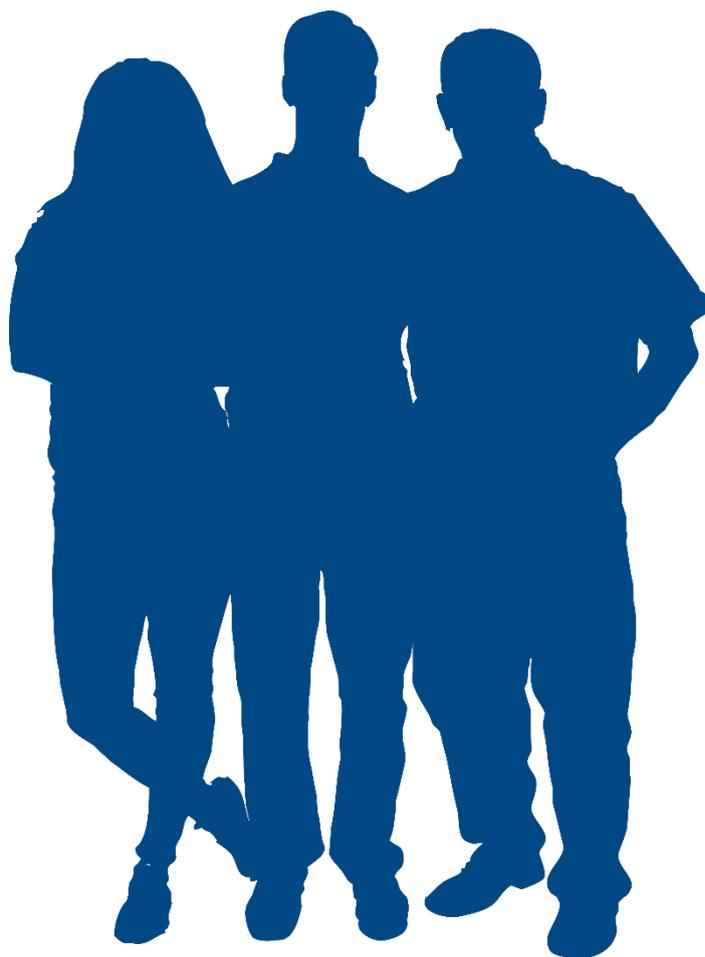


CITIZENS ADVICE HARROW

VOLUNTEER APPLICATION PACK



Information for Prospective Volunteers

Which role is right for me?

More information about each role appears towards the end of this document but an important factor is how much time you are able to give.

Role	Length of initial training	Minimum commitment (days per week)	Minimum commitment (length)
Reception & Administration	3-4 weeks	one half day per week	6 months
Project Support	6-8 weeks	one half day per week	6 months
Information Support Assistant	10-12 weeks	one full day or two half days per week	12 months
Adviser	Around 18 weeks (after gateway training)	Two full days or Four half days per week	2 years
Research & Campaigns	2-3 weeks	one half day per week	6 months

Other roles may be more flexible.

How to apply

You can submit a completed application pack to volunteer@citizensadviceharrow.org.uk

About the Citizens Advice Service

Introduction

Our core principles are: Confidentiality of our client's information, impartiality, free advice and independence from authority.

We aim:

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

We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination.

What does the Citizens Advice service do?

To provide advice....

The Citizens Advice service is a network of charities offering information and advice through face-to-face, phone, email, webchat and online services.

Every year the service helps over 2 million people with more than 7 million problems relating to issues including debt, benefits, employment, housing and immigration. Advisers help clients to fill out forms, write letters, negotiate with creditors.

Influence policy....

We are not just here for times of crisis - we also use clients' stories anonymously to campaign for policy changes that benefit the population as a whole.

The sheer number of clients we see each year means that if there is a recurring injustice out there, it is inevitably being played out in our interview rooms and recorded on our database of client evidence. This database is analysed by the national policy team, who are then able to bring problem areas to the attention of those who are - often inadvertently - causing them.

About Citizens Advice Harrow

At Citizens Advice Harrow, volunteers are at the heart of the service we provide to people in the local community.

*Our office is open to the public between **9:30 am to 4:30 pm, Monday to Friday.***

Our telephone service is available between:

Mon & Tues: 9:30 am – 3:30 pm

Thurs & Fri: 9:30 am – 1:00 pm

Most of our volunteers provide generalist information and advice, but we offer specialist services in debt and money. We are fortunate to have engaged the services of a number of local solicitors offering free initial legal advice.

Volunteering at Citizens Advice Harrow

You are reading this booklet because you have expressed an interest in volunteering with us. This is a worthy intention, and one which could change your life, as well as the lives of the clients you work with. But it is not a decision which should be undertaken lightly. The impact on our clients of the advice we give is immeasurable, and that means the quality of advice must be of the highest standard. All advisers are highly trained and supported by experienced supervisors. The Citizens Advice Learning Programme is highly regarded because it is rigorous and demanding, and as such the information support assistant & adviser roles require a level of commitment over and above that of most volunteering roles. But those who rise to the challenge find it worthwhile and rewarding beyond their expectations.

If you are looking for a less demanding role, but one which is nonetheless stimulating and rewarding, you may be interested in a supporting role such as administration or reception. These roles are vital to the smooth running of the service and to ensure that our clients have a positive experience of their visit.

There is more information about the various opportunities available, and any questions you may have about them, in the following pages.



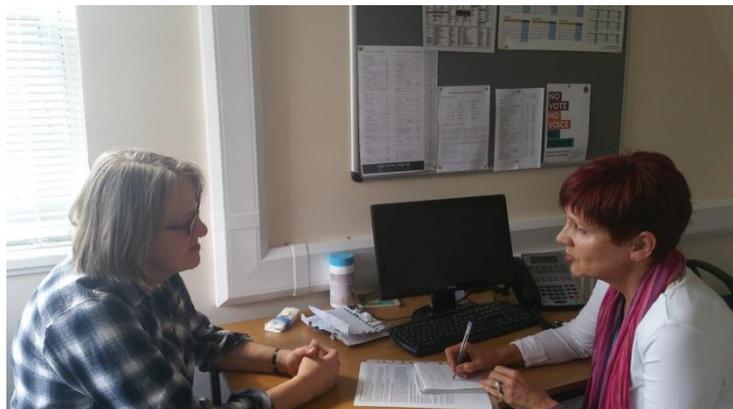
Volunteer roles: Information Support Assistant

Information Support Assistants see clients face to face and speak to them over the telephone.

They provide an initial diagnostic service, identifying the issue and the most appropriate next steps the client can take towards

resolving it. An information support assistant will typically see up to five clients in a morning or afternoon session, using information on the Citizens Advice public website www.citizensadvice.org.uk as well as other resources, to assist the client. At the conclusion of the interview, the client will have been given information to help them progress their enquiry, signposted to another organisation for further help, or made an appointment for generalist or specialist advice.

Information support assistants can also work on supporting AdviceLine and email to provide a similar service to clients who make contact with us this way.



Volunteer roles: Adviser

Advisers explore the client's problem in more detail, providing in-

depth advice which often requires extensive research. An adviser will help the client identify their rights and responsibilities, the options available to them, and the most appropriate action to take. Advisers are trained to use a comprehensive information system exclusive to Citizens Advice, and have access to specialist support in all the main enquiry areas. An adviser will typically see two clients in a morning or afternoon session, with each interview lasting 45 minutes to an hour.

How long does it take to train to be an adviser or information support assistant?

At Citizens Advice Harrow, all our advisers undertake information support assistant training initially. Some volunteers will then continue in the information support assistant role, while others will undertake further learning to become advisers.

The Learning Programme is a competency based modular programme, comprising individual study, observation activities, group sessions and external training courses. A variety of methods is used to assess competence at various points during the programme, and a certificate is issued on completion.

At Harrow we deliver the programme over a 10-12 week period of weekly group sessions supported by individual study. This is followed by a further period of learning while working with clients. The time it takes to complete the learning programme depends on how much time each volunteer is able to commit. As a guide, an information support assistant volunteering for one day every week could be fully trained in nine months, and adviser training will typically take a further year of study and working with clients before full competence is reached.

What skills and experience do I need?

Our volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures; they bring a wealth of different skills, knowledge and experience with them. We celebrate the diversity of our volunteers, which reflects the community we serve. We do not prescribe any previous knowledge or experience, because we provide comprehensive training and support; however, much of the work we do is computer based, so a reasonable level of proficiency in using information technology is required.

How much time do I need to commit?

Being a volunteer adviser or information support assistant is a serious commitment, and we ask all prospective volunteers to carefully consider whether their individual circumstances are compatible with a regular, long term volunteering role before applying. We invest considerable resources in training and developing volunteers in these roles, in the expectation that they will make a long term contribution to the service we provide to our clients.

For the information support assistant role, we ask our volunteers to be available on a regular weekly basis for at least one day per week (or two half day sessions) for a minimum period of one year. For the adviser role the requirement is two days a week but for a minimum of two years. During the initial stage of the training programme you may find that the volume of learning requires a little more of your time than this, but the learning materials are online and some can be completed at home.

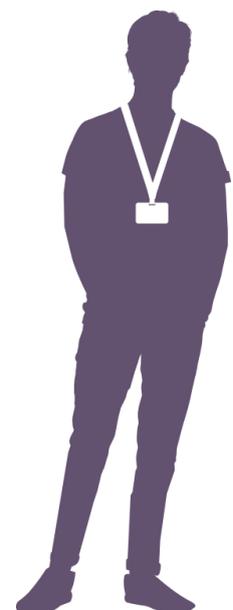
If you would like to volunteer but you can't make a long term commitment, you can still make a valued contribution to our service. Please see below for more information about the other volunteering opportunities available at Citizens Advice Harrow.

Volunteer roles: Receptionist/Administration Assistant

Receptionists are the public face of Citizens Advice Harrow and play a key role in determining our clients' experience of their contact with us. They welcome visitors and explain how the service operates. They liaise with other roles within the service, manage the reception area, support vulnerable clients, input confidential client data and respond to general enquiries.

Receptionists do not give advice, but they can help clients find information.

There are a wide variety of admin tasks which support the work of the service, from the inevitable filing to



answering the telephone, calling clients to confirm appointments, and supporting specialist advisers and caseworkers.

Other volunteer roles

If none of the above roles appeal to you but you have a particular interest or skill which you would like to put to good use, you can still offer your services as a volunteer and we will try to match you with a suitable opportunity. Some examples would be people with marketing or fundraising experience could help us with publicity or fundraising events. People with experience in communications could help us develop and maintain our social media presence, and someone with an interest in research and campaigns could get involved with some of our campaigning or policy work.

If you can't commit to regular or long term volunteering but you feel you have a contribution to make, ask us how you could help and we will work with you to develop a suitable opportunity for you.



Application form to become a Volunteer with Citizens Advice Harrow

Thank you for your interest in Volunteering with the Citizens Advice Harrow.

We will use this form to:

- Shortlist suitable applications for interview
- Understand more about your interests and availability so we can match you to a suitable role

Before completing this form please read the last section on Policies and Data Protection Statement.

For more information, or if you'd like to complete this form in an alternative format please contact Citizens Advice Harrow via email at volunteer@citizensadviceharrow.org.uk.

About you

Name:	
What pronouns do you use to describe yourself?	
Email address	
Phone number	

Area of residence (town/city):	
Preferred method of contact:	

<p>What motivated you to apply to volunteer with Citizens Advice? Please include the reason you want to volunteer and what you hope to get from the experience as well as any skills or experience you have that could help you in this role.</p>

Your Preferences and Availability

<p>Are you interested in any particular type of volunteer role(s)? For example, Giving information and advice face to face, phone, email or webchat, fundraising, customer service/reception, admin, IT, research and campaigns, media [Please note that applicants must be 16 or over to provide advice to clients].</p>

Availability

When are you usually free to volunteer your time? Tick any and all that apply

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM					
Afternoon 1:00 PM – 4:30 PM					
My availability may vary week to week					

How many hours per week, or days per week would you like to volunteer for?

--

How long do you aim to volunteer for?

--

Are there any times that you're unlikely to be available, e.g. school holidays?

--

Additional Information

Are there any dates and times when you are unavailable for an interview?

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	Yes	No
<p>Are you aware of any circumstances that could be a conflict of interest?</p> <p>This may include other volunteering or paid work you have in other organisations such as a local housing association, local authority, government body, criminal or civil court, another organisation that provides advice.</p>		
<p>Are you a current client of Citizens Advice?</p> <p>Many volunteers have used the service before but we are unable to offer volunteer roles to clients who are currently receiving advice, to ensure there is no conflict of interest.</p>		

If yes to any of the above, we will be in contact to discuss it with you.

How did you hear about this opportunity?

For example, local Citizens Advice website, another website, word of mouth, through your local community, through your university and college, at a volunteering fair or event, through your own experience of accessing the Citizens Advice service, or other?

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What happens next?

Once we've reviewed your application, we'll be in touch. If shortlisted we will invite you to an interview, either online or in-person, to get to know you better.

We will ask you about any additional support needs you think we should know about in order to enable you to participate in an interview.

If you're successful at the interview, we will ask if you can provide us with ID (ideally photo ID, but don't worry if you haven't got this, we can discuss other options as this isn't a barrier to volunteering with us).

We will also ask you for the names and contact details of two people, who know you in a work related, academic or professional capacity. This could be an employer, teacher, tutor, a colleague, or former-colleague where you have worked or volunteered before. It could also be someone who knows you well (but not a member of your family).

If you'd like to discuss who can be a referee at an earlier stage please contact:

Citizens Advice Harrow, 4 Gayton Road, Harrow, HA1 2FB.

Or email:

volunteer@citizensadviceharrow.org.uk.

There is no expectation or requirement for you to do so.

Declaration	
All the information I have provided above is accurate to the best of my knowledge.	
Signed:	Date:

If you are under 16, please also ask your parent or legal guardian to sign the permission below.	
I understand the volunteer role and possible time commitment and give permission for.....[volunteer's name] to undertake this role if successful.	
Signed:	Date:
Relationship to applicant:	

Please return this form via email to: volunteer@citizensadviceharrow.org.uk

Or via post to: Citizens Advice Harrow, 4 Gayton Road, Harrow, HA1 2FB.

Policies

Entitlement to work or volunteer

If you are not a UK or Irish citizen, it's important you check you are permitted to

volunteer or carry out 'unpaid work' in addition to your main reason for entering the country, to avoid jeopardising your visa status. You can find more information on the [NCVO website](#).

Our policy on convictions

We only ask about criminal convictions and criminal records after we've made a conditional offer of volunteering. This is to help make sure that volunteers are selected based on their skills and potential.

Having a criminal record is not in itself a barrier to volunteering. Please note that it is Citizens Advice policy not to recruit any individual who has an unspent conviction (for all roles) for a sexual offence against a vulnerable adult or child and our policy not to recruit any individual who has a spent, or unspent, conviction (for roles that require a Standard or Enhanced DBS check) for a sexual offence against a vulnerable adult or child. This is the case regardless of when the offence took place. Citizens Advice public liability insurance excludes this. Where an offer of volunteering is subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, we will inform you of this.

If you wish to contact us to discuss your individual circumstances at an earlier stage, please contact volunteer@citizensadviceharrow.org.uk.

There is no expectation or requirement for you to do so as we will provide you with a Criminal Record self-disclosure form to complete after a conditional offer of a volunteering role has been made. The self-disclosure form you will receive contains information about privacy notice and legal rights over your data in relation to convictions and criminal records data.

Privacy Notice

We'll use the information you provide in your application form for Citizens Advice Harrow to progress your application for becoming a volunteer.

This is done under our legitimate interests in potentially onboarding you as a volunteer and to contact you to further progress your application.

Your information will be accessed by colleagues involved in the recruitment process and will be securely stored on OneDrive for 1 year from the date the application was received.

If you are recruited we will retain your contact information in order to involve and support you. We will also collect additional information, such as next of kin details, and over time records of training, support meetings and where relevant, appraisals. Again, it will be kept securely, and only those people who need to see your information in order to involve you will have access to it.

All use of volunteer information will be relevant to their involvement, and may include:

- Contacting volunteers when necessary
- Making changes to role, support or equipment to improve accessibility
- Monitoring statistical details of our volunteers
- Providing ongoing support to volunteers
- Monitoring the quality of advice given to clients
- Addressing problems or complaints

You have legal rights over your data, including access to it, and the right to ask that it is corrected, restricted or deleted. There is more information on these rights on the Information Commissioner's Office website: www.ico.org.uk

If you have any questions about the use of your data, please contact:

Citizens Advice Harrow, 4 Gayton Road, Harrow, HA1 2FB.

Or email:

volunteer@citizensadviceharrow.org.uk.



Volunteer diversity monitoring information

Background

Citizens Advice values diversity, promotes equality, and challenges discrimination. We welcome and encourage volunteer applications from people of all backgrounds, age, disability, gender, gender identity, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation.

Monitoring recruitment and selection procedures is one way that helps us to ensure that there is no discrimination in our recruitment process. To do this we need to know about the diversity profile of people who apply for volunteer roles at Citizens Advice Harrow.

Data protection overview

If you are happy to provide it, we will use this information for the sole purpose of allowing us to monitor equality of opportunity and treatment as necessary to maintain or promote equality within Citizens Advice Harrow.

The information you give us will be kept securely, won't be shared outside the service and is confidential.

It will not be seen by anyone responsible for making recruitment decisions or have any impact on you directly.

If you are successful in your application and we require this information for other purposes, you will be asked to provide it separately - i.e. this form will not be used for other purposes.

If you would prefer not to answer any of the questions we ask, please leave them blank. If you would like us stop using the information you provide, please contact us.

Note on accessibility: If you are using keyboard only and need to put a cross in the relevant box, you should be able to arrow across, and type in the box. If this is not

possible put a cross next to the relevant box. If you need this form in another format please contact Citizens Advice Harrow.

Diversity Monitoring Form

Applicant ref. number (local Citizens Advice use only):	
Which volunteer role are you applying for?	

Age

Which age bracket do you fit into? Put a cross in the relevant box.

Under 25	
25 - 34	
35 - 44	
45 - 54	
55 - 64	
65 and over	
Prefer not to say	

Gender

What term best describes your gender? Put a cross in the relevant box or write in a preferred term.

Female	
Male	
I prefer to use another term Please write in.....	
Prefer not to say	

Sexual orientation

What is your sexual orientation? Put a cross in the relevant box or write in a preferred term.

Heterosexual/Straight	
Gay Man	
Gay Woman/Lesbian	
Bisexual	

I prefer to use another term Please write in.....	
Prefer not to say	

Ethnic origin

How would you describe yourself? Choose **one** section (A to E) and put a cross in the relevant box within it.

A. White	English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British	
	Irish	
	Gypsy or Irish Traveller	
	Any other White background Please write in.....	
B. Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	White & Black Caribbean	
	White & Black African	
	White & Asian	
	Any other Mixed/multiple ethnic background Please write in.....	
C. Asian/Asian British	Indian	
	Pakistani	
	Bangladeshi	
	Chinese	
	Any other Asian Background Please write in.....	
	African	

D. Black/African/ Caribbean/Black British	Caribbean	
	Other Black/African/Caribbean background Please write in.....	
E. Other ethnic group	Arab	
	Any other ethnic group Please write in.....	
Prefer not to say		

Disability

A disabled person is defined under the Equality Act 2010 as someone with a **'physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'**

Do you consider yourself to be disabled under the Equality Act 2010?

Yes	
No	
Prefer not to say	

The information on this form is for monitoring purposes only. If you require any reasonable adjustments to be made in the recruitment process or at work subsequently if appointed, please make sure you tell us separately from this form. 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.

Gender Identity

Do you identify as *Trans?

Yes	
No	
Prefer not to say	

***Trans is an umbrella term to describe people whose identity is not the same as the sex they were assigned at birth. People under the trans umbrella may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms – including transgender.**

Religion or belief

Which group below do you most identify with? Put a cross in the relevant box.

No religion	
Christian (including all denominations)	
Buddhist	
Hindu	
Jewish	
Muslim	
Sikh	
Any other religion or belief Please write in.....	
Prefer not to say	

How did you hear about this opportunity?

Please include details below: