



Civic Centre, The Colonnade, High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW

Our ref: Recruit/MAC-AW/3-24

Date: 20th March 2024

Dear Applicant,

Welfare Benefits Adviser – full time (36 hours per week), permanent subject to continued funding

Do you have established skills and experience as a Welfare Benefits Adviser and the personal resilience to assist people affected by cancer by maximising their income through benefits?

We have secured funding from Macmillan Cancer Charity and have a vacancy for a Welfare Benefits Adviser to assist people affected by cancer apply for benefits, undertake appeal work and is also capable of delivering debt, housing and employment advice.

You'll work alongside our small advice team offering comprehensive advice on benefits, debt, housing to name but a few enquiry areas. Client contact our service by phone, face-to-face and email. You will provide outreach service in community-based organisations (hospital/hospice, GP surgeries and conduct home visits).

The successful applicant will be an experienced Welfare Benefits Adviser with excellent technical knowledge and have a flexible approach to work. You will demonstrate highly developed listening, communication, and interpersonal skills necessary to handle emotional and complex situations in a way which always balances empathy with professionalism. You will be expected to maintain CitA quality standards and work efficiently and consistently to ensure targets are met.

We are Equal opportunities employer and welcome applicants from Disabled, Ethnic Minority and LGBTQ+ candidates. We will be flexible to make reasonable adjustments in terms of accessibility to enable short listed candidates to be interviewed and the successful candidate to work with us.

Please email recruitment@hillingdoncab.org.uk for an application pack and send your completed application by email to reach me by 10am on 15/4/24.

Interviews are scheduled for 22nd April. If you have not heard from us by 18/4/24, please assume that you have been unsuccessful on this occasion.

I look forward to receiving your application.

Yours faithfully,

Jas Nagra
Advice Services Manager

HILLINGDON ADVICE & INFORMATION LINE 0808 278 7893 Website: www.hillingdoncab.org.uk

Registered office: Citizens Advice Hillingdon Ltd, Uxbridge Citizens Advice, High Street,

Uxbridge, UB8 1UW

Charity registration number 1045991, Company Limited by guarantee, Registered number 03028957

England Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, FRN: 617635

Citizens Advice Hillingdon has a complaints handling procedure. Please email admin@hillingdoncab.org.uk to request a copy of the complaints leaflet to be either posted or emailed to you.



About the role

We are looking for a full-time specialist Welfare Benefits Adviser with the ability to undertake benefits, debt, housing and employment casework.

About national Citizens Advice

Aims and Principles of the Citizens Advice Service

The service aims:

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

We provide free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination.

About Hillingdon Citizens Advice

Citizens Advice Hillingdon (CAH) is a registered charity providing advice services in our very busy office in Uxbridge and outreach locations. We have been operating locally for over 80 years.

Our service makes a real contribution to the most deprived individuals and communities and each year we make a positive difference to people's lives. We support the local economy by maximising people's income, negotiating affordable debt repayment plans and helping people claim the benefits they are entitled to among other positive outcomes.

CAH is affiliated to national Citizens Advice and has its own Trustee Board which is responsible for setting the strategy and budget for the organisation. Day to day responsibility for the running of the organisation is with the Chief Executive Officer and the Advice Services Manager (ASM). Three Advice Session Supervisors report to the ASM and currently we have 23 paid staff and 14 volunteers.

CITIZENS ADVICE HILLINGDON

JOB DESCRIPTION

Designation:	Welfare Benefits Adviser
Reporting to:	Designated line manager
Current Salary Scale:	Competitive (Depending on Experience)
Hours of Work:	Full time (36 hours per week)
Duration:	Permanent subject to continued funding
Location:	Uxbridge, Yiewsley office and outreach locations

PURPOSE OF JOB:

To provide a high quality, effective and efficient advice and casework service to people affected by cancer and contribute to social policy work in accordance with the aims and principles of Citizens Advice and the requirements of its Membership Scheme.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

1) Advice Work

Project-specific requirements for Macmillan Professional/ Generalist Adviser:

The post holder will provide information, advice and guidance to clients through our Macmillan-funded Welfare Benefits project, providing a welfare rights advice service to people affected by cancer in the London Borough of Hillingdon to maximise their income and mitigate affect of income shock There is a particular emphasis on reaching under-served communities as much as possible. The role of the adviser working on the Macmillan project is to:

- 1.1 Interview clients face-to-face and on the telephone, using sensitive listening and questioning skills in order to allow clients to explain their problem(s) and explore options.
- 1.2 Use Citizens Advice Advisernet and other appropriate resources to find, interpret and communicate all relevant information to clients in a manner they can understand.
- 1.3 Provide appropriate advice, researching and exploring options and implications, to help clients set priorities and make informed decisions.

- 1.4 Provide a full welfare benefits casework service to clients affected by cancer, including disability benefits and other sources of financial support such as grants and help with health and travel costs. Assist clients to prepare for benefit appeals.
- 1.5 Act for the client using appropriate communication skills and channels. Undertake main enquiry casework on clients' behalf, write letters, negotiate with third parties as required.
- 1.6 Sustain effective working relationships with outreach agencies and other relevant stakeholders to ensure good service delivery is being provided.
- 1.7 Maintain clear, timely and accurate case records that meet the quality standards required for continuity of casework, information retrieval, statistical monitoring, accountability and report preparation. Gather client feedback to measure client satisfaction and suggestions to improve service.
- 1.8 Seek support as necessary to ensure a high quality of advice, good practice and the degree of casework taken on is appropriate.
- 1.9 Co-operate with the arrangements of the Advice Session Supervisors in providing cover and delivering the advice services required.
- 1.10 Work in a variety of settings including community outreach, hospitals and local authority offices as required and when doing so, promote the service.
- 1.11 Liaise with statutory and voluntary organisations such as the Department of Work and Pensions, HMRC, Social Services and community organisations as appropriate and stay up to date with changes in local policies and services.
- 1.12 Ensure all work meets the quality standards and the requirements of Macmillan Cancer Care and maintain any additional records needed.

2) Training and Professional Development

- 2.1 Complete the training required to comply with quality assurance processes in a timely manner and ensure GDPR-compliant training is completed on an annual basis. Attend when requested training provided by Macmillan Cancer Care.
- 2.2 Keep up to date with new and changing legislation, policies and procedures and with local and national issues relevant to Macmillan project.
- 2.2 Read Citizens Advice circulars and information items, and relevant publications to ensure up to date knowledge in advice work and Macmillan service.
- 2.3 Attend regular training to develop knowledge, skills and expertise and relevant internal and external meetings as agreed with the line manager
- 2.4 Participate constructively in staff meetings, team meetings and supervision sessions.
- 2.5 Undergo training in Information & Communication Technology and case management software and apply it as needed to carry out the tasks of the post.
- 2.6 Assist in the training of volunteers from the local community as and when required.

3) Administration

- 3.1 Ensure information sources you use are up to date.
- 3.2 Maintain statistics, records and analysis of work in accordance with CAH's systems, procedures and funding conditions.
- 3.3 Be responsible for own file management and letter writing and implement admin procedures as directed by the line manager.
- 3.4 Comply with GDPR and cyber security measures in use of telephony and IT equipment for multichannel delivery of advice services.

4) Research and Campaigns

- 4.1 Recognise the root causes of problems and contribute evidence, highlighting issues of particular concern to disadvantaged groups and to clients in general.
- 4.2 Support research and campaigns work through various channels including case studies, data collection and client consent.
- 4.3 Participate in local and regional research and campaigns initiatives developed by CAH, its projects and partner organisations.

Policies of the Citizens Advice Service:

The post holder must:

- Understand and demonstrate commitment to the aims, principles and policies of Citizens Advice and the CAH service.
- Abide by health and safety guidelines and share responsibility for own safety and that of colleagues
- Have due regard in the planning and execution of their duties at all times to the aims, principles and policies of CAH and Citizens Advice.

Other duties and responsibilities

In addition to the above tasks and duties, the post holder will be required to carry out such other tasks and duties which may be identified as being generally compatible with the post and to the aims of CAH.

Special Features (as required):

To attend CAH and Macmillan meetings. Also represent CAH as and when required within Citizens Advice and to other organisations both during the day and occasionally in the evenings and at weekends.

The post holder will be based at offices of CAH and required to work from community venues as well as conduct home visits to see clients as directed.

Signed.....(Post holder)

Date.....

Signed.....(Line Manager)

Date.....

PERSON SPECIFICATION

1. Work experience

- 1.1 For this post you must hold the Certificate in Generalist Advice Work (or equivalent through experience at an independent advice centre or law centre for example) and have significant recent full-time experience or part-time equivalent of advising clients and carrying out casework. You must be capable of providing reliable high quality advice

2. Skills/abilities/knowledge

- 2.1 Thorough knowledge and experience of the welfare benefits system, including Universal Credit, and ability to carry out accurate benefit check calculations and support clients with limited IT knowledge with online claim applications.
- 2.2 Experience and knowledge of energy, debt, housing and employment advice is essential to be able to undertake casework in these areas.
- 2.3 Sufficient knowledge of multiple advice enquiry areas and capable of identifying emergencies, deadlines and making appropriate referrals.
- 2.4 Excellent verbal communication skills with the general public, including those with limited English, and with stakeholders and third parties plus the ability to write clear and concise case records, letters and reports in English.
- 2.5 Ability to research, interpret and communicate complicated information to clients, including negotiations with other agencies and third parties.
- 2.6 Ability to use telephone and IT systems to deliver advice across multiple channels, for example web chat and telephone.
- 2.7 Ability to user IT systems and packages, and resources in the provision of advice, record keeping and document production.
- 2.8 An up to date understanding of equality and diversity and its application to the provision of advice and commitment to the principles of the Citizens Advice service.
- 2.9 Work effectively and flexibly as a member of a team. This must include recognising own limitations and boundaries and when to ask for support.
- 2.10 Plan and manage your own workload, set priorities and monitor performance so that standards for advice provision and quality are consistently maintained.
- 2.11 Ability to give and receive feedback objectively and sensitively, and a willingness to challenge constructively, and to develop knowledge and skills in advice topics.
- 2.12 Demonstrate an understanding of issues concerning the local community and how HCA can use its client enquiry information to influence social policy.

3. Policies of the CA Service

- 3.1 Demonstrate understanding of and support for the aims, principles and equal opportunities policies of Citizens Advice and the CAH service

Notes for applicants on completing the application form

- The form should be completed in black pen or typed. This will make photocopying easier.
- Please do not send in your CV. It will not be considered if you do.
- One of your referees should be your present or most recent employer. If you have not been employed or have been out of employment for a long time, please give the name of someone who knows you sufficiently well to confirm the information you have given and to comment on your ability to do the job. This should not be a relative or purely personal friend.
- The enclosed person specification lists the minimum requirements for this post. When shortlisting for interview the selection panel will only consider the information contained in your application form and will assess this against the person specification.
- In **Section 3 'Reasons for Applying'**, to assist the selection panel, please ensure you take **each point** of the person specification in turn and give specific (numbered) information that demonstrates how you have the skills and abilities needed for this post, giving examples of your relevant skills, abilities and experience.
- The selection panel cannot make assumptions about the nature of the work you have done or your experience from a list of job titles. It is therefore important that you use the space provided in **Section 3 'Reasons for Applying'** to demonstrate how you meet the requirements. Paid and voluntary work are not the only experiences worth quoting. Other life experiences and skills may be just as valid.
- If you are shortlisted for interview, the selection panel will ask you questions based on the person specification which will cover the areas in more detail.

CITIZENS ADVICE HILLINGDON



Please complete this form in type or **black ink**, to enable clear photocopying.

APPLICATION FOR APPOINTMENT

I am interested in applying for the post of Generalist Adviser with experience of energy advice and the ability to undertake benefits, debt, housing and employment casework

Your details

Surname: _____

First Names: _____

Home Address: _____

Tel Home: _____

Tel Work: _____

E-mail: _____

May we contact you at work? Yes/No

REFERENCES

Please give below the names and addresses of two referees.

First Referee

(current or most recent employer)

Second Referee

Name.....

Name.....

Position Held.....

Position Held.....

Address.....

Address.....

.....

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Tel. no.

Tel. no.

E-mail:

E-mail:

If you are shortlisted, may we take up your references before interview? Yes/No

NOTICE

If applicable, what period of notice are you required to give?

1. Relevant Paid and/or Unpaid Work Experience

This may include your current/previous employment (including job training schemes), school placements, voluntary work, community activities and life experiences (continue on a separate sheet if necessary). Please put in date order, starting with the most recent.

Dates		Employment/Voluntary Work etc. (give full name of organisation and your job title/role)
From	To	

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2. Education and Training

Please list your education and training (including short courses). Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.

Dates From To	Nature of Course / Qualifications Gained

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3. Reasons for Applying

Give reasons for applying for this job demonstrating how you meet each of the criteria listed in the **person specification**, giving examples of your relevant skills, abilities and experience.

Taking **each point** of the person specification in turn, please give specific information that demonstrates how you have the skills and abilities needed for this post.

Any additional information which you wish to provide should be limited to no more than two sides of A4 paper.

4. Miscellaneous

Do you hold a current full driving licence? YES/NO

Do you speak any languages in addition to English?
(please list) _____

Have you been interviewed and tested for a post with HCA previously? YES/NO
If yes, in which year and month?

Are you entitled to work in the UK? YES/NO

How did you learn of this vacancy? _____

Criminal convictions

Have you had any previous convictions not regarded as spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974? YES/NO

If 'yes' please provide details of the offence and the date of conviction.

Please note: the Citizens Advice service requires that all staff who have direct access to clients, where any part of the work is primarily targeted at legally defined vulnerable adults or children, have their criminal records checked. However, the Citizens Advice service is committed to the promotion and delivery of equal opportunities to staff and so has a policy to ensure ex-offenders are not discriminated against.

All offences, other than sexual crimes against a child or vulnerable adult, will be treated on an individual basis taking into account issues such as the risk to the client, the circumstances of the offence (e.g. what it was, is it relevant to role, how long ago it was) and the reputation of and risk to the bureau.

Data Protection Act 1998

As part of the recruitment procedure we may collect and store sensitive personal data about you. We are required by law to obtain your consent to such data being recorded. It is our policy to store data relating to recruitment procedures for 18 months after the date on which it is submitted, for internal auditing purposes. Any information of this nature will be treated confidentially.

Sensitive personal data is defined as information relating to any of the following: racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious beliefs, trade union membership, health, sexuality or sex life, offences and/or convictions.

For the purposes of the Act the Data Controller is Citizens Advice Hillingdon Ltd.

DECLARATION

I declare the information given on this form is correct to the best of my knowledge and acknowledge that by signing this form I give my consent to sensitive personal information being recorded and stored by Citizens Advice Hillingdon Ltd.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Your completed application and/or any enquiries relating to your application should be sent for the attention of Jas Nagra using this email address: recruitment@hillingdoncab.org.uk

Equal Opportunities



The CA service is committed to equal opportunities for all.

Citizens Advice Hillingdon Service is fully committed to the Service's Equal Opportunity policies. These cover all aspects of the Service, including the way it is provided, the ways people can gain access to it and the way we employ people to work within it.

With regard to recruitment, we aim to ensure that no applicant receives less favourable treatment than another on the grounds of race, sex, disability, HIV/AIDS, sexuality, class, age or any other unfair criterion.

Our recruitment procedures are designed to ensure that all job applicants are considered solely on the basis of their aptitudes and abilities in relation to the requirements of the job.

This includes shortlisting without reference to personal details. We would, however, request you to complete our equal opportunities monitoring form.

The purpose of this statement is to make clear Citizens Advice Hillingdon's commitment to the principles of Equal Opportunities and to assure all applicants that their application will be dealt with fairly. Citizens Advice Hillingdon is committed to taking positive action to implement equal opportunities for people facing discrimination and to ensuring that its workforce is representative of the whole community.

Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form

Confidential

Please return this with your application form. It will be separated from your application before short-listing. The selection panel will not see this form, which will be used for monitoring purposes only.

Post applied for _____

Surname/family name _____

First name(s) _____

Gender **Female** **Male** **Other**

Age _____

Ethnic Group

Please indicate which ethnic group you belong to:

White	Mixed	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Gypsy / traveller	Chinese or Other Ethnic Group
British <input type="checkbox"/> Irish <input type="checkbox"/> Other White <input type="checkbox"/>	White and Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> White and Black African <input type="checkbox"/> White and Asian <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed British <input type="checkbox"/> Other Mixed <input type="checkbox"/>	Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian <input type="checkbox"/>	Black Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> Black African <input type="checkbox"/> Other Black <input type="checkbox"/>	Gypsy / traveller <input type="checkbox"/>	Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> Other Ethnic Group <input type="checkbox"/>

Disability

Do you have a disability? Yes No

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CITIZENS ADVICE SERVICE



THE AIMS OF THE SERVICE

The Citizens Advice service provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. It values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination. The service aims:

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

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The Equality Act 2010 harmonises and strengthens and replaces most previous equality legislation. The following legislation is still relevant:

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Work and Families Act 2006
- Employment Equal Treatment Framework Directive 2000 (as amended).

As an employer, CAH will treat all employees and job applicants equally and fairly and not unlawfully discriminate against them.

We recognise the benefits of a diverse workforce and will take steps to ensure that:

- we endeavour to recruit from the widest pool of qualified candidates practicable
- employment opportunities are open and accessible to all on the basis of their individual qualities and personal merit
- where appropriate, positive action measures are taken to attract applicants from sections of society that are under-represented in the workforce
- selection criteria and processes do not unlawfully discriminate
- where appropriate lawful exemption (genuine occupation requirements) will be used to recruit suitable staff to meet the special needs of particular groups
- any third parties acting for CAH in respect of employment are made aware of the requirements not to discriminate and to act accordingly.

CAH will treat seriously all complaints of unlawful discrimination on any forbidden grounds made by employees, volunteers, clients or other third parties and will take action where appropriate.

CAH will record and monitor information about staff and volunteers, including trustees, on the basis of age, gender, ethnicity and disability.

Where it is possible to do so, and where doing so will not cause offence or discomfort to those whom it is intended to protect, we will monitor the sexual orientation and religion or belief of staff so as to ensure they are not being discriminated against in terms of the opportunities or benefits available to them.

We will store equal opportunities data as confidential personal data and restrict access to this information. Equal opportunities information will be used exclusively for the purposes of equal opportunities monitoring.