

## **Adviser**

### **Job Description & Personal Specification**

**Responsible to:** Advice Session Supervisor

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**Purpose of Role:** Working within the aims, principles and policies of the Citizens Advice Bureaux Service:

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

The Adviser is a member of a team of voluntary and paid bureau staff who provide a free, confidential, impartial and independent service to the public.

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#### **Key Work Areas & Tasks:**

##### **Advice Giving**

- Interviewing clients, both face-to-face and on the telephone, using sensitive listening and questioning skills in order to allow clients to explain their problem(s) and empower them to set their own priorities.
- Finding, interpreting and communicating the relevant information and exploring options and implications in order that the client can come to a decision.
- Acting, where necessary, on behalf of the client, negotiating, drafting or writing letters or making appropriate referrals.
- Negotiate with third parties such as statutory and non-statutory bodies as appropriate.
- Refer internally or externally to other specialist advisers as appropriate.
- Maintain clear and accurate case records for the purpose of continuity of casework, information retrieval, statistical monitoring and report preparation.
- Recognising the root causes of problems and participating in taking appropriate action.
- Keeping up to date on important issues by attending the appropriate training and keeping up to date with briefings.
- Attending bureau meetings.

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## **Social Policy**

Contribute to the bureau's work of exercising a responsible influence on Social Policies, both local and national, which affects the lives of clients by:

- Identifying and raising social policy issues through Petra (Bureau Evidence Forms (BEFs) and potential BEFs.
- Participating in local and national social policy campaigns.

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## **Equal Opportunities**

Contribute towards the Citizens Advice Equal Opportunities and Positive Action policies by providing an impartial and non-judgemental service to all clients:

- Identifying possible breaches of Equal Opportunities legislation, policy and practice
- Taking part in Social Policy exercises focused on Equal Opportunities issues
- Challenging behaviour which indicates discrimination
- Assisting the bureau in making the service accessible to all clients irrespective of race, gender, sexual orientation and disabilities

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## **Training & Development**

- Keep up to date with information resources, legislation, policies and procedures and undertake appropriate training
  - Read relevant publications
  - Attend internal and external meetings as agreed with the line manager
  - Assess own practice to identify own training and development needs
  - Being assessed by the manager or advice session supervisor
  - Learning through training and reflecting on practice
  - Keeping informed about the local community, local and national issues, developments and changes
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## **Development of Service**

Contribute to the development of the team by:

- Participating in staff meetings
- Contributing to the discussions about the overall planning and policy of the bureau service, both nationally and locally

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## **Administration**

- Use IT for statistical recording, record keeping and document production.
- Ensure that all work confirms to the bureau's policies and procedures.
- Share in the necessary administration (e.g. ordering leaflets) and domestic tasks.

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## **Further Opportunities within the Service**

The Adviser has the opportunity to develop in ways that may include any of the following:

- Developing a wider or deeper level of advice skills for a particular enquiry area
  - Social Policy work, e.g. writing reports, letters or articles, working with other organisations and individuals, including councillors, MPs and the media
  - Helping with training, e.g. tutoring, in-bureau training, supervising trainees
  - Representing the service, e.g. publicity, giving talks on the work of CAB, working with local community groups, representing bureau workers on committees
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## **Personal Skills & Qualities that an Adviser Needs:**

- A commitment to the aims and principles of the CAB service
- Excellent communication skills
- Being open and approachable
- Ability to communicate clearly both orally and in writing
- Ability to give and receive feedback objectively and sensitively and a willingness to challenge constructively
- Ability to quickly sift through information and extract what is relevant
- Understanding of the issues involved in interviewing clients
- Understanding of the issues affecting society and their implications for client and service provision
- Basic mathematical skills, including percentages
- Respect for views, values and cultures that are different to their own
- 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 their own limits and boundaries in the role