

Adviser

Job Description & Personal Specification

Responsible to: Advice Session Supervisor

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.

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.

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.

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

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

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.

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
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