



Citizens Advice Taunton
St Mary's House
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Taunton, TA1 1SB

citizensadvicetaunton.org.uk

Citizens Advice Taunton

Adviser

Role Description & Person Specification (August 2021)

Reporting to

Advice Session Supervisor

Lead Manager

Operations and Advice Manager

Context

Working within the aims, principles and policies of the Citizens Advice 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 local Citizens Advice Taunton staff who provide a free, confidential, impartial and independent service to the public.

About the role: Advice giving

- Interviewing clients on the telephone, digitally and face-to-face, using sensitive listening and questioning skills in order to allow clients to explain their problem(s) and empower them to set their own priorities.
- Recognising the root causes of problems and participating in taking appropriate action.
- Researching, interpreting and communicating the relevant information, and exploring options and implications to enable the client to come to a decision and progress the next steps.
- Acting, where necessary, on behalf of the client, negotiating, drafting or writing letters or making appropriate referrals.
- Negotiating with third parties such as statutory and non-statutory bodies as appropriate.
- Referring internally or externally to other specialist advisers or organisations as appropriate.
- Maintaining clear and accurate case records for the purpose of GDPR compliance continuity of casework, information retrieval, statistical monitoring and report preparation. -

About the role: Research & Campaigns

Contribute to CA Taunton's work of exercising a responsible influence on social policy, both local and national, which affects the lives of clients by:

- Identifying research and campaign/social policy issues.
- Raising research and campaign/social policy issues through Evidence Forms.
- Staying abreast of key local and national research and campaign/social policy work.
- Participating in local and national research and campaigns.

About the role: Equality & Diversity

Provide an impartial and non-judgemental service to all clients:

- Identifying possible breaches of Equality legislation, policy and practice.
- Taking part in Research and Campaigns exercises focused on Equality, and Diversity and Inclusivity.
- Challenging behaviour which indicates discrimination.
- Contributing to an accessible service for all clients irrespective of any factor such as race, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

About the role: Training & Development

To advise effectively it is essential to:

- 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.
- Being assessed by the training and advice supervisor, session supervisor or operations & advice manager.
- Assess own practice to identify own training and development needs.
- Learn through training and reflect on practice.
- Keep informed about the local community, local and national issues, developments and changes.
- Once experienced, support new trainee advisers in their learning and during their initial stages of advice work with clients.

About the role: Administration and Service Development

- Use IT for statistical recording, record keeping and document production.
- Ensure that all work confirms to CA Taunton's policies and procedures.
- Share in the necessary administration and domestic tasks.
- Participate in staff meetings.
- Contribute to discussions about the overall planning and policy of the service, both nationally and locally.

Person specification

Essential

- A commitment to the aims and principles of the Citizens Advice service.
- Excellent communication skills.
- Being open and approachable.
- Ability to communicate clearly both verbally 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 **your** 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 your own limits and boundaries in the role.

Desirable

- Previous information or advice giving experience
- Previous experience in a relevant subject e.g. law, social work, advocacy

Further Opportunities within the Service

Advisers have the opportunity to develop in ways that may include any of the following:

- Developing a wider or deeper level of advice skills and knowledge for a particular enquiry area.
- Research & Campaign work, e.g. writing reports, letters or articles, working with other organisations and individuals, including councillors, MPs and the media.
- Contributing to training, e.g. mentoring, delivering bite-size training.
- Representing the service, e.g. publicity, giving talks on the work of CA Taunton, working with local community groups, representing CA Taunton on committees.
- Contributing to fundraising activities.
- Becoming a volunteer representative on the board of trustees.

