



Help to Claim Adviser

Job pack

Thanks for your interest in working at Citizens Advice Havering. This job pack should give you everything you need to know to apply for this role and what it means to work at Citizens Advice.

In this pack you'll find:

- Our values
- 3 things you should know about us
- Overview of Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Havering
- The role profile and personal specification
- Terms and conditions
- What we give our staff

Want to chat about this role?

If you want to chat about the role further, you can contact Sally Maydell by emailing sally@haverincab.org.uk or calling 01708 763531.



Our values

Citizens Advice Havering is proud to be a member of the Citizens Advice network and shares its vision, aims and values.

We understand how important our culture is to the way we provide our services and agree with the values articulated by Citizens Advice in *Future of Advice*.

We're inventive. We're not afraid of trying new things and learn by getting things wrong. We question every idea to make it better and we change when things aren't working.

We're generous. We work together, sharing knowledge and experience to solve problems. We tell it like it is and respect everyone.

We're responsible. We do what we say we'll do and keep our promises. We remember that we work for a charity and use our resources effectively.

In Havering, we work within these values. We have also adopted three additional value statements that guide our partnership strategy and business development plan.

We're people focused. We value the dedication, commitment and resources that people hold. They deserve the best service and support, regardless of who they are. We do everything to empower and support them so that they develop their full potential – as clients and users of our services, as volunteers and as members of our staff team.

We're collaborative. We know that we cannot achieve our goals on our own. We work closely with other Citizens Advice in the network and the CAH/CAR partnership stands as an example of our partnership commitment. We value the role that communities play as advocates for local people. We support and partner with them so that our advice reaches those that cannot reach out to us directly.

We're innovative. We understand that we cannot stand still and that our service must respond to changing needs and circumstances. We try out new ways of working locally – and work with our national network to make sure our learning impacts national practice.



3 things you should know about us

1. We're local and we're national. We have 6 national offices and offer direct support to people in around 300 independent local Citizens Advice services across England and Wales.

2. We're here for everyone. Our advice helps people solve problems and our advocacy helps fix problems in society. Whatever the problem, we won't turn people away.

3. We're listened to - and we make a difference. Our trusted brand and the quality of our research mean we make a real impact on behalf of the people who rely on us.

How Citizens Advice Havering works

Citizens Advice Havering (CAH) was set up in 1939 and has a long and successful history of providing advice to the residents of Havering and campaigning on the issues that affect them. CAH is amongst the smaller local Citizens Advice (LCAs) and as such has to work hard to meet demand with limited resources.

CAH's **delivery model** is based on phone and email advice. CAH joined the national phone advice service Adviceline in September 2020. We are also part of the national Help to Claim service, which is largely delivered by advisers working from home using phone and webchat.

Since March 2020, our staff and volunteer advisers have been providing phone and email advice from home. This has increased our capacity to respond to **callers** and we provide phone and email advice five days a week. CAH provides a comprehensive advice offer ranging from signposting to in-depth casework.

Increasingly important is **partnership work** with other local charities, public bodies and local businesses. Most recently, we have benefited from a partnership with the local foodbank in Rainham, funded by their parent body The Trussell Trust. CAH is an active member of the London Citizens Advice network, which is developing as a legal entity to ease access to pan-London partnership and funding opportunities.

In Havering we have long established **outreach provision** in the libraries in Harold Hill and Hornchurch. Outreach has also stretched into the local authority's community hubs in Harold Hill and Rainham. This is an important aspect of our commitment to delivering services as close to need as possible. With that in mind, we are hoping to develop further community outreach provision, resources permitting.

We deliver our services with the help of 27 **paid staff**. Most of our paid staff provide advice services. Our staff team is supported by approximately 40 dedicated **volunteers** who provide administration and reception services, assess advice needs and provide advice, mainly during our general advice sessions.



Overview of Citizens Advice

The Citizens Advice service is made up of Citizens Advice - the national charity - and a network of around 300 local Citizens Advice members.

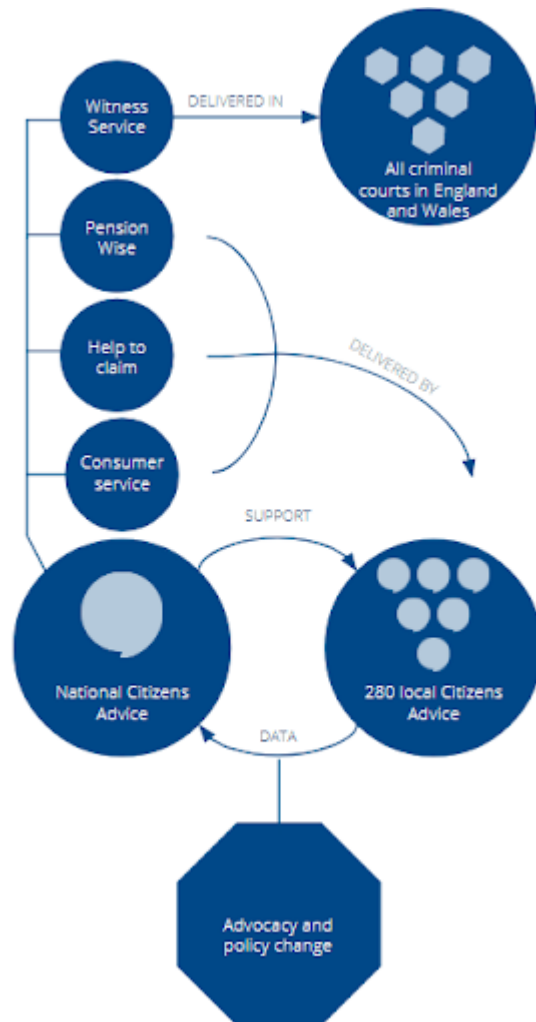
This role sits our network of independent charities, delivering services from

- over 600 local Citizens Advice outlets
- over 1,800 community centres, GPs' surgeries and prisons

They do this with:

- 6,500 local staff
- over 23,000 trained volunteers

Our reach means 99% of people in England and Wales can access a local Citizens Advice within a 30 minute drive of where they live.



Help to Claim Adviser

The role

The purpose of the role of Help to Claim Adviser is to deliver a service called “Help to Claim” which offers support to help people make a new Universal Credit claim and be ready for when their first payment arrives.

The team also support clients to maintain access to Universal Credit in the first assessment period to minimise the risk of debt and other issues arising through loss of access to their benefits.

We are looking for a trained adviser with the ability to interview clients using sensitive listening and questioning skills to get to the root of the reasons why they may be considering a claim for Universal Credit (UC). Advisers then support and empower clients to make a claim for UC where appropriate, maintaining structure and control of meetings with them via channels including webchat, telephone, video conferencing and face to face.

You will also have a good knowledge of the benefits system as well as a commitment to the aims and principles of the Citizens Advice service.

Key tasks include:

Advice Giving & Administration

- Interview clients using sensitive listening and questioning skills in order to allow them to explain their problem(s) and empower them to set their own priorities.
- Use Citizens Advice resources to find, interpret and communicate relevant information to clients
- Research and explore, from trusted sources, benefit options and their implications so that clients can make fully informed decisions about whether and when to make a claim
- Use telephony and IT equipment for multi-channel delivery of advice services e.g. webchat
- Act for the client where necessary using appropriate communication skills and channels

- Liaise with third parties such as statutory and non-statutory bodies as appropriate on clients' behalf.
- Refer clients for further help internally or to other specialist agencies as appropriate
- Use IT software for statistical recording of information relating to research and campaigns and funding requirements, record-keeping and document production complying with GDPR standards
- Deliver support to clients in an outreach setting including local Job Centres and other community-based settings
- Ensure that all work meets the highest quality standards and the requirements of the funder
- Ensure that work reflects and supports the Citizens Advice service's equality and diversity strategy
- Maintain detailed case records for the purpose of continuity of casework, information retrieval, statistical monitoring and report preparation
- Ensure income maximisation through undertaking accurate benefits calculations and interpreting these for clients
- Work closely with colleagues and management team to ensure the smooth running of the project and promote its aims
- Ensure all work conforms to the charity's systems and procedures
- To meet specified individual targets

Research and campaigns

- Support our research and campaigns work through various channels including case studies, data collection and client consent.

Personal Development

- Keep up to date with legislation, policies and procedures and undertake appropriate training for your role and personal development.
- Read relevant publications.
- Attend relevant internal and external meetings as agreed with the line manager.
- Prepare for and attend supervision sessions/team meetings as appropriate.
- Complete the required training to comply with quality assurance processes.
- Assist with Service initiatives for the improvement of services.

Other duties and responsibilities

- Promotion of the service with volunteers and other paid staff
- To be accessible across the offices to provide support to volunteers
- Prepare, deliver and support learning for volunteers interested in supporting the project
- Carry out any other tasks that may be within the scope of the post to ensure the effective delivery and development of the service.
- Demonstrate commitment to the aims and principles of the CA service
- Abide by health and safety guidelines and share responsibility for own safety and that of colleagues
- Carry out any other required administrative tasks related to the project



Person specification

Person Specification

- Experience of advice provision is essential
- Ability to interview clients using sensitive listening and questioning skills to get to the root of the issues and empower clients, whilst maintaining structure and control of meetings with them
- Ability to assess the capability of clients to make and manage a digital claim where appropriate or find alternatives
- Ability to understand and explain the detail of benefit rules and how they apply to clients, using appropriate language, and seek further support where these are unclear
- Ability to give and receive feedback objectively and sensitivity and a willingness to challenge constructively
- Ability to interview and support clients across multiple channels
- Good problem-solving skills and a proactive approach to dealing with issues that arise in advice provision, including effective liaison with third parties where appropriate
- Knowledge of the benefits system including Universal Credit required (or prepared to undertake training to support effective development of benefits knowledge)
- Ability to carry out accurate benefit calculations and explain them to clients, including the rules, eligibility criteria and pro's and cons of UC and other

benefits

- Ability to use telephony and IT systems to deliver services across multiple channels predominately webchat and telephone
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Ability to use IT systems, packages and resources in the provision of advice, record keeping and document production. Ability to be flexible in approach in order to deliver the system using the channels required.
- Ability to work in outreach settings using own initiative with an understanding of information assurance and safety in those settings
- Ability to monitor and maintain standards for advice provision expected by the charity
- Ability to commit to work with the aims, principles and policies of the Citizens Advice service
- A good up to date understanding of equality and diversity and its application to the provision of advice
- A solid ability to explain and demonstrate how clients can make and manage their Universal Credit claim online. This requires a good knowledge of this fully digital benefit system and the DWP processes and policies that it underpins, including supporting clients to solve problems, from own knowledge or in liaison with DWP advisers.
- Experience working with and supporting volunteers
- Ability to prioritise own work, meet deadlines and manage caseload
- Demonstrate understanding of social trends and their implications for clients and service provision
- Ability and willingness to work effectively as part of a team, supporting colleagues with sometimes challenging and difficult client situations
- Understanding of and commitment to the aims and principles of the Citizens Advice service and its equality and diversity policies
- A commitment to continuous professional development, including a willingness to develop knowledge and skills in advice topics



Terms and conditions

Salary: £28,737 pro rata

Location: Hybrid

Contract: Fixed term until 31st March 2024

Hours of work are by mutual agreement

The position is full time, 35 hours per week over five days.

We offer 33 days paid holidays (including statutory holidays) pro rata.

Pension contribution of 3% is also offered, with an expectation that the post holder contributes 5%.

Closing date for applications: Friday 20th October 2023 at 2pm