

# Volunteering at Citizens Advice Barnsley

**citizens  
advice**

**Barnsley**

**We Are Citizens Advice -  
the people's champion**



# What We Do

**We provide free, confidential, impartial and independent information and advice to anyone that needs it.**

People can access the service by phone, email, online, at local drop-in sessions and by face-to-face appointment.

Our main centre of operations is at Wellington House in the town centre. But our outreach advisers are out in the local community every day of the week.

We can help with varied and complex issues including:

- benefits
- debt
- employment
- housing
- family
- immigration
- consumer

... and many other areas.



**[barnsleycab.org.uk/volunteering/](https://barnsleycab.org.uk/volunteering/)**

# Who we are

Citizens Advice Barnsley (CAB) recently celebrated our 60th anniversary. Since we first opened our doors to the public in 1964, our volunteers have played a vital role in the service.

Today, volunteers are involved in many areas of our work, from reception and administration, to research and campaigns, and information and advice.

As a charity, we continually have to seek out funding opportunities. We must generate our own income to continue the service. Many people don't realise that we are an independent charity and we still have work to do in raising awareness of this.

As an independent charity we source funding to support the running of our services and to deliver specific projects



In 2023/24 we received funding for  
**26**  
different projects or activities!

# Our Team

Our team is made up of paid staff and volunteers. We usually have around 15 volunteers working alongside paid staff at any given time.

Volunteers are supported throughout their learning by our training officer and are supported by a team of service supervisors whenever they are working with clients.

CAB is a friendly, inclusive place to volunteer! You'll meet people from varied backgrounds with varied interests, all of whom come to CAB because they enjoy helping people, want to influence change in local and national policy, and enjoy learning new skills.



# Commitment

We ask that volunteers in every role are able to meet a minimum time commitment every week. For information and advice roles, this is 8 hours per week.

These hours allow volunteers to complete training, attend volunteer meetings, observe a wide range of activities and work towards their chosen goals in a timely manner.

We've found that sporadic volunteering doesn't tend to work! Ultimately, our volunteers are providing a professional service to the public so we need to be able to rely on them.



# Recruitment

Our recruitment process has 2 stages:

- Completion of an application form
- An informal interview

The process allows plenty of opportunity to ask any questions you might have, to find out more about the roles our volunteers are involved in, and to get to know more about the work we do. We think Citizens Advice Barnsley is an amazing place to volunteer. But of course, we are biased and we'd like you to make up your own mind before you commit!

# Training

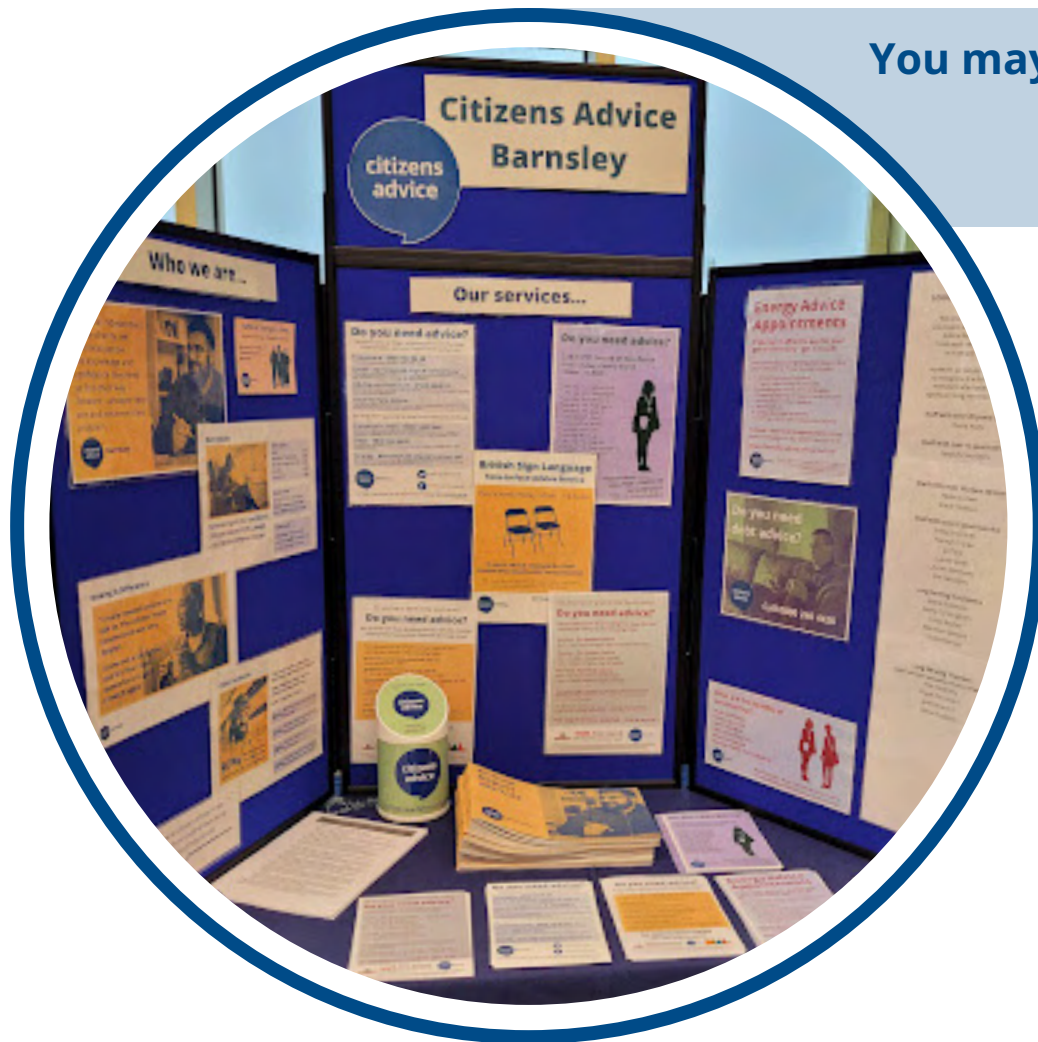
**As a new volunteer you will be supported by everyone, including more experienced volunteers, who know exactly how you feel because they were once new to CAB too.**

We view training to a nationally recognised standard as integral to the service we provide. The training is easily accessible, but requires a commitment to learning. Our blended learning programmes are made up of self-study packs, e-learning, practical coaching sessions and participative observation.

The length of each unit varies with the complexity of the tasks that volunteers are engaged in. So, someone volunteering in an administrative capacity will have less study to complete than someone learning to give advice. In addition to training specific to your chosen role, all volunteers complete training around key issues such as maintaining client confidentiality and GDPR.



# Volunteering Roles



You may already know what you'd like to do but if not, we'll give you a quick run through of our current volunteering roles.

## Administration

As part of the Admin Team, you would:

- Use a range of IT software to help to maintain and develop administrative systems
- Control stock of leaflets and materials and update information
- Help to arrange events
- Create promotional materials e.g. leaflets and posters
- Receive and send postal mail, email and telephone calls
- Take notes and minutes at meetings
- Scan and file documents
- Support/assist the Office Manager with administration

[barnsleycab.org.uk/volunteering/](https://barnsleycab.org.uk/volunteering/)

# Volunteering roles

## Reception

When working on reception at Wellington House or in one of our community locations you would:

- Welcome all clients and other visitors to the local Citizens Advice
- Explain to the client how long they might be waiting, what will happen and you might give out a form for clients to fill in
- Provide clients with information where appropriate, including details of other agencies, and point out leaflets/factsheets from public information websites
- Help with the day-to-day running of the Citizens Advice service
- Answer the phone, reply to emails and post
- Assist with incoming paperwork
- Update spreadsheets and databases
- Schedule appointments for clients
- Collect client feedback



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# Volunteering Roles

## Initial Advice Assessor

You will generally be the first point of contact a client has with Citizens Advice Barnsley. As part of this role you could learn how to:

- Support the delivery of our high-quality advice and information service
- Provide advice to clients on all categories of law, focusing on welfare benefits, financial capability and income maximisation issues
- Deliver advice via a variety of channels including telephone, email, video or face-to-face
- Signpost and / or make effective referrals to other agencies as appropriate
- Use IT for statistical recording, record keeping and document production
- Utilise the Citizens Advice electronic case management system to keep accurate and up-to-date client records
- Collect and collate data to contribute towards reports, evaluation and service feedback
- Attend relevant internal and external meetings as agreed with the Team Leader and/or Line Manager
- Maintain client confidentiality, and adhere to GDPR and data protection policies
- Adhere to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policies



# Volunteering Roles

Once you've completed your initial advice assessor training, you could move onto the following roles:

## **Adviser – As a CAB Adviser, you will:**

- Build on skills you've developed as an initial advice assessor
- Interview clients, both face-to-face and on the telephone, letting the client explain their enquiry and helping the client to set priorities
- Find, interpret and communicate the relevant information and explore options and implications in order that the client can come to a decision
- Act, where necessary, on behalf of the client, negotiating, drafting or writing letters or making appropriate referrals and recording clear and accurate case records
- Contribute to Research and Campaigns work by completing evidence forms
- Keep up to date on important issues by attending the appropriate training and by essential reading, attending workers meetings and other training events
- Help us maintain CAB's quality of advice



# Volunteering Roles

## Research and campaigns support

In this role you will:

- Help advisers to identify suitable cases for social policy work
- Assist with completion of social policy evidence forms
- Organise the collection of evidence for local and national projects and reports
- Uphold the aims and principles of the CAB service
- Work within the service's policies and values, especially equal opportunity and anti-discrimination policies



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# And finally...10 reasons why you should volunteer:

1. Meet like-minded people who want to help others
2. Acquire new, widely transferable skills and knowledge in a supportive environment, developing your confidence and wider employability
3. Get to know your community better and feel part of it in a way you might never have felt before
4. Use your skills and knowledge in a really productive and fulfilling way that feels good
5. Challenge yourself to meet your goals to gain a great sense of achievement
6. Take pride in the positive impact you're having
7. Actually contribute to changing the policies and procedures that affect people unfairly instead of feeling frustrated and powerless
8. Get yourself out of the house and keep your brain active, while being part of something important
9. Inspire others to help people and contribute to making society a better place for everyone
10. Your experience will change the way you see yourself in the world



# Find out more

There are plenty of ways that you can find out more about CAB.

Our national website [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

Our local website [www.barnsleycab.org.uk](http://www.barnsleycab.org.uk)

Our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/barnsleycab](http://www.facebook.com/barnsleycab)

Our Instagram account [instagram.com/barnsleycab](https://www.instagram.com/barnsleycab)

Or you could email our training officer [elisabeth.evans@barnsleycab.org.uk](mailto:elisabeth.evans@barnsleycab.org.uk).

To make a donation or raise funds while you shop visit our easyfundraising page [here](#).

**We hope that we sound like your kind of organisation and that you'll submit an application. Thank you for your interest!**

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**Citizens Advice Barnsley is a  
Hate Crime Reporting Centre**