

Volunteering at Citizens Advice Barnsley



Barnsley



Here to help everyone

Who We Are and What We Do...

Citizen's Advice Barnsley (CAB) has been **supporting local people** for more than 60 years! As an independent, local charity, our **volunteers play a vital role** in the running of our services.

Our **advice is free, confidential and impartial** and can be accessed through a variety of different channels, including:

- face-to-face, drop-in advice sessions,
- in-person appointments,
- and by telephone, video and email.

We help with many things, such as managing debt and money worries, claiming Universal Credit and other benefits, as well as housing, employment and energy issues. We can also help to improve digital skills and give access to digital equipment, data and emergency household support.

Our **volunteers are involved in many areas** of our work, including:

- reception and administration,
- advice and information signposting,
- research and campaigns.

We
source external
funding to support
the running of our
services and to
deliver specific
projects.



In
2024/25 we
received funding for
25
different projects
or activities!

Volunteering Roles - What Would You Like To Do?

Administration

As part of the Admin Team, you would:

- Use a range of I.T. programmes to maintain and develop administrative systems.
- Create leaflets and posters and keep information up-to-date.
- Help to arrange and manage events.
- Receive and send postal mail, email and telephone calls.
- Scan and file documents.
- Assist the Office Manager with administration.

Reception

As a receptionist at Wellington House or one of our community locations, you would:

- Welcome clients and other visitors.
- Explain to the client how long they might be waiting and what will happen.
- Provide clients with information, such as details of other agencies, leaflets and public information websites.
- Collect feedback from clients.
- Schedule appointments for clients.
- Help with the day-to-day running of the service, answering the phone, replying to emails, processing paperwork and keeping spreadsheets and databases up-to-date.



barnsleycab.org.uk/volunteering/

Volunteering Roles...

Initial Advice Assessor

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

- Support the delivery of our high-quality advice and information service.
- Provide advice to clients on all aspects 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.
- Adhere to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion policies.
- Utilise the Citizens Advice electronic case management system to keep accurate and up-to-date client records.
- Maintain client confidentiality, and adhere to GDPR and data protection 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 - Let the client explain their enquiry and help them to set priorities.
- Help us maintain CAB's quality of advice.
- Find, interpret and communicate relevant information and explore the options and implications for the client to come to a decision.
- Act on behalf of the client by negotiating, writing letters, making appropriate referrals and recording clear and accurate case records.
- Contribute to Research and Campaigns work by completing evidence forms.



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.



Our Team

Our team is made up of paid staff and volunteers.

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

CAB is a friendly, inclusive place to volunteer. You'll meet people from a variety of 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.

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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.

Our training programme is to a nationally recognised standard and 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.



Commitment

We ask that volunteers commit to a minimum 8 hours per week, either as one full day or 2 half days. This allows volunteers to complete training, attend 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:

1. Completion of an application form.
2. An informal interview.

The process allows plenty of opportunity to ask any questions you might have, find out more about the roles our volunteers are involved in, and 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!



barnsleycab.org.uk/volunteering/

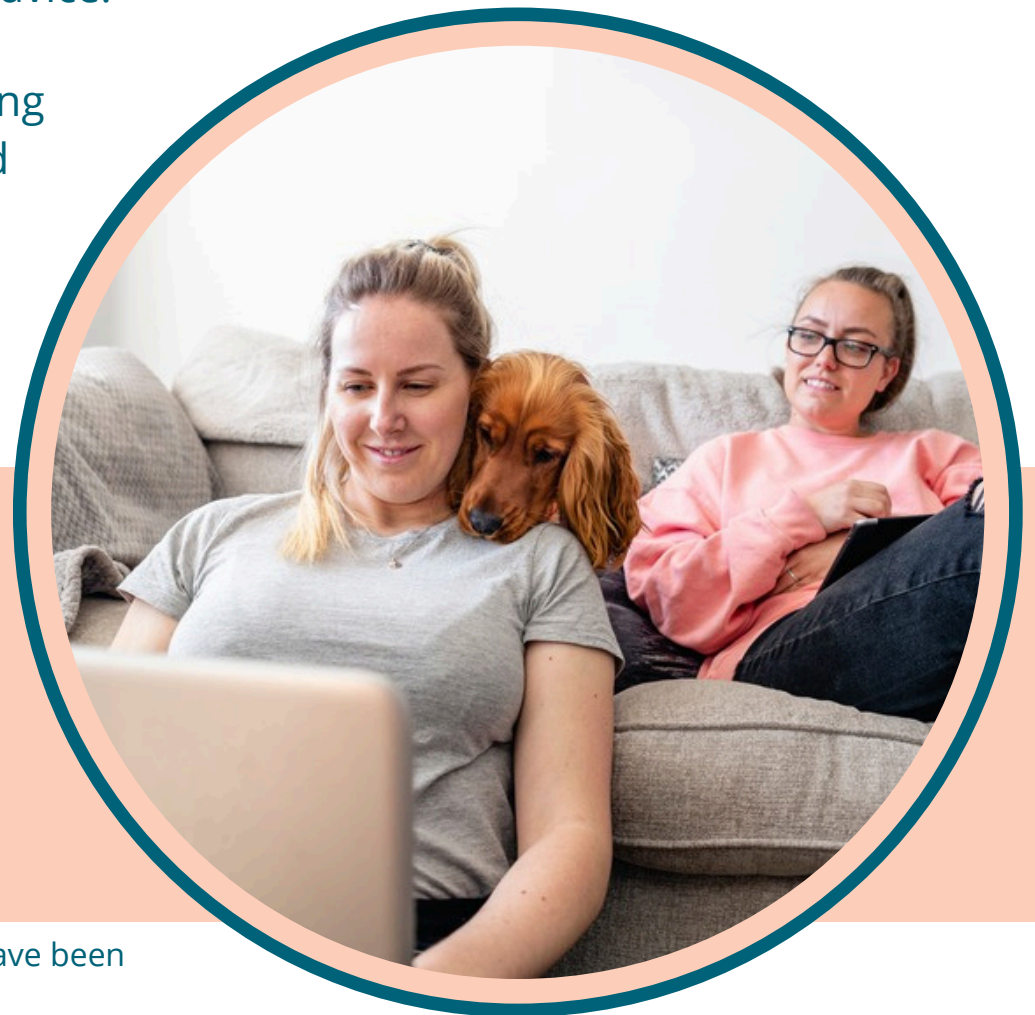
What Our Volunteers Say - Olivia's Story

Olivia* is studying a course at college that requires her to complete an industry placement, which is how she found out about volunteering opportunities at Citizens Advice Barnsley (CAB). "I loved the idea of helping people with so many different types of issues and doing hands-on work in the community through different forms of advice. I was interested in the opportunity to progress from delivering email advice to in-person, face-to-face advice."

"CAB has an amazing team of people who are willing to support and mentor new volunteers. I've gained valuable experience by observing advisers during appointments with clients, which has been really eye opening. It's given me a greater awareness of the daily challenges people face."

"My confidence has built as I've progressed through my training. At first it seemed intimidating, but doing the hands-on work with the amazing support of my supervisor has been fun and given me such a great sense of accomplishment!"

*Volunteers have been given different names and certain details have been omitted or changed to preserve their anonymity.



What Our Volunteers Say - Noah's Story

Aspiring solicitor, Noah*, chose to volunteer with Citizens Advice to gain valuable experience of learning directly from qualified advisers. "It was highly recommended by the careers and placements team at my university that observing and supporting real client cases would help me to build a solid foundation for my future career."

"My experience at Citizens Advice Barnsley has been overwhelmingly positive. Every staff member has been incredibly supportive, approachable, and genuinely committed to helping volunteers grow. The environment is friendly and collaborative, making it easy to seek guidance whenever needed."

"Through my observations of the advisers and by progressing through the online training, I have learned to stay impartial and unbiased, maintain strict confidentiality, and adhere to GDPR. These skills have improved my professionalism and prepared me for a future in legal practice."

*Volunteers have been given different names and certain details have been omitted or changed to preserve their anonymity.



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. 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.



How to Apply...

We hope that we sound like your kind of organisation and that you'll submit an application.

If you are interested in volunteering for Citizens Advice Barnsley, please email:

admin@barnsleycab.org.uk

Thank you for your interest!

For more information about Volunteering and Citizens Advice Barnsley, please visit:

www.barnsleycab.org.uk/volunteering/

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Citizens Advice Barnsley is a
Hate Crime Reporting Centre