



# Sheffield Citizens Advice

## **Volunteer role description and attributes**

### **Receptionist**

Sheffield Citizens Advice provides generic and specialist advice services at 11 main sites and numerous smaller outreach sites, and via our telephone advice line. We seek to empower our clients and support them to improve their confidence and capability, including in relation to finance. We advise mainly on welfare benefits, debt, housing, employment, immigration and discrimination. We provide advice in numerous languages. We offer bespoke services for people with mental health problems, the Deaf community, the gypsy and traveller community, people in hospital, and refugees and asylum seekers. We provide mental health advocacy services. We undertake specialist casework, including debt services and that undertaken by our legal service. We have well established partnerships and referral pathways including with social landlords and statutory services. We are a partner in Sheffield Healthwatch.

We aim for excellence. Our ambition is to be among the best advice services in the country, and one of the leading voluntary and community organisations in Sheffield. We campaign for change to social policy to improve the well-being of the people and communities we support.

### **Purpose**

Our volunteer receptionists work alongside our advice teams to meet and greet clients and other visitors who attend our offices during open door and appointment-only sessions.

The reception role in our organisation is a busy and challenging because we deal clients from all walks of life some of whom may be anxious, confused, angry or upset. Clients approach us on a wide range of issues and approximately a third of them are first time users of the service who may not know what to expect from us. The receptionist plays a vital role in making clients feel welcomed and respected and helping them to understand the systems. The receptionist works as part of the advice team and works with the Advice Session Supervisor and others to help manage the flow of work during drop-in sessions to ensure that the service runs as smoothly as possible. At some sites with heavy demand the receptionists may work in pairs.

We will provide you with a warm welcome, training and on-going support so that you can carry out your role effectively. Volunteer receptionists complete a basic induction and training programme which includes some on-line self instruction materials. Volunteers are required to work in line with all our policies and procedures.

## **Tasks**

- Complete a basic training programme including online training materials and associated learning activities such as shadowing other experienced receptionists.
- Greet clients and explain the current queuing and work management systems in place.
- Help to identify clients who may have specific communication needs or vulnerabilities and ensure the Advice Session Supervisor is made aware
- Maintain awareness of the workflow and make sure the Advice Session Supervisor is alerted to any emerging issues including client complaints.
- Access the Citizens Advice on-line database to cross check client information records and to enter basic data about clients, with the clients' consent.
- Answer the office phone, take messages from clients and callers and transfer calls.
- Participate in supervision sessions to develop skills and contribute to service development.

## **Attributes**

Our volunteer receptionists are expected to be,

- Punctual and reliable.
- Willing to learn and attend training.
- Able to communicate effectively with clients.
- Able to work constructively as part of a team.
- Volunteer receptionists need to be calm, patient, assertive and non-judgemental.

Community language skills are very useful, although not essential

## **Time commitment**

Volunteers receptionists need to be available for at least one session per week lasting between four to five hours. Times vary slightly between sites and also allow for preparation and handover time. Morning sessions are slightly longer.