



Advice worker

Job description and person specification

Sheffield Citizens Advice was set up in October 2013.

We provide 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 of job

Our advice workers, working alongside volunteer advisers, are responsible for providing generalist and specialist advice to clients, including advice about financial confidence, welfare benefits, debt, housing, employment, immigration, discrimination and other areas of public and social welfare law.

Advice workers seek to support and empower clients to address their needs, and provide tailored casework when this is needed.

Advice workers provide advice that is accessible by all clients, taking full account of clients' communication and other needs.

Advice workers are also, subject to their skills, experience and where necessary accreditation, responsible for providing specialist advice to clients.

Advice workers provide services in a wide range of settings, including our own offices, those of partner agencies and client's homes.

Advice workers also, subject to their skills and experience, provide support to the provision of our advice services.

Advice workers are required to undertake all their duties in accordance Sheffield Citizens Advice policies and procedures, utilising national and local sources of information and guidance.

Main duties and responsibilities

Advice provision

All advice workers are required to:

- Welcome clients to the service
- Enable clients to explain their needs
- Assess clients' needs and advise on the options for meeting these needs
- Research the options for meeting clients' needs
- Support clients to develop and implement action plans to meet their needs
- Assist clients to implement their action plan, including liaising with relevant agencies
- Undertake casework for clients, including where appropriate court and tribunal representation
- Contribute to telephone, drop-in and pre-booked appointment services
- Contribute to multi-disciplinary and multi-agency service provision
- Create and maintain comprehensive client and service provision records, using information technology and other systems
- Provide services in accordance with all relevant quality standards
- Contribute to ensuring that service performance standards and targets are met
- Identify and report evidence to support social policy campaigns
- Advice support
- Advice workers may, subject to their skills and experience, and subject to the needs of the service be required to:
- Supervise other advice workers and volunteer advisers, including advice session supervision, case checking and independent file reviews
- Support and develop volunteers
- Support the design and delivery of training

Professional learning and development

Advice workers are all required to undertake learning and development including:

- Keeping up to date with legislation
- Keeping up to date with policies and procedures
- Attending internal and external training
- Obtaining and maintaining accreditation for specialist practice

Person specification

Knowledge

Comprehensive knowledge of:

- one or more of financial confidence support and interventions, and/or welfare benefits, debt , housing, employment, immigration, discrimination and public law
- advice giving processes and systems
- the communities supported by Sheffield Citizens Advice

Skills

High quality skills:

- listening, verbal, written and presentation communication skills
- to communicate well with clients, colleagues and other agencies
- to work in partnership in multi-professional and multi-agency settings
- to utilise case recording and other information systems that support advice provision
- to undertake analysis and research to support the formulation of action plans to meet clients' needs
- to represent clients and negotiate on their behalf
- to supervise advice sessions, and undertake case checking and independent file reviews
- to support and empower clients

Aptitude

Commitment to:

- the goals and values of Sheffield Citizens Advice
- working flexibly and to adapting to changing needs and priorities
- team working
- the delivery of service performance standards
- personal learning and professional development
- equality opportunities and to valuing diversity

Qualifications, training and accreditation

Successful completion (or willingness to complete) mandatory training requirements.

Accreditation as required for specialist areas of advice practice.