

**citizens
advice**

Copeland

Volunteer Information Pack



We are Citizens Advice Copeland

We provide ***Free, Independent, Confidential*** and ***Impartial advice*** to everyone on their rights and responsibilities for the problems they face, no matter what they may be. We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination.

We're here to help you with a range of issues such as:

- Managing debt
- Benefits
- Household bills
- Energy advice
- Housing problems
- Understanding rights at work
- Hardship relief
- Family/relationships breakdown
- Consumer issues
- Immigration



How we deliver our advice

Our advice can be accessed by telephone, email, online or at one of our outreach sessions

Telephone



Freephone call 0808 278 7959

A member of our admin team will take your details and arrange a call back from one of our advisors

If our lines are busy you will be transferred to our national Adviceline service.

Monday to Friday (9am – 5pm)

Online



Visit our website citizensadvicecopeland.org.uk for the most up to date information and updates or visit our social media:



Facebook.com/AdviceinCopeland



copeland_ca



copelandcitizensadvice

Email



If you prefer to email us please send details of your enquiry and how we can contact you to advice@cacopeland.org

Outreach



We have several outreaches in the Copeland area where you can come along and have a chat with one of our team about the query you are dealing with.

Thanks for your interest in finding out more about Citizens Advice Copeland and volunteering with us.

This pack will give you more information about our volunteer roles and how to apply.

If you have any questions or need this pack in another format please contact Chloe our Recruitment, Training and Volunteer Development Officer chloe@cacopeland.org or call **01946 693321**

Message from Chloe:

"Hello, I'm Chloe I'm responsible for recruiting volunteers and supporting our current volunteers. We all work together as one big team, our volunteers are invaluable to the services we provide and we couldn't help as many people as we do without people like you! You would be joining an enthusiastic, committed and friendly team of volunteers. If you join our team you can expect a high level of support and encouragement from all our staff and volunteers."

Messages from Anne and Shirley 2 of our current volunteers:

*"The training is very in-depth and I'm learning a lot. It has been a bit overwhelming but I'm thoroughly enjoying it! I've always been a carer and I wanted to do something that was different but still helping people. I really just want to help people". **Anne***

*"Volunteering gives me a different perspective on life, you get to meet people of all ages and backgrounds and this really helps me and empowers me. I really look forward to coming to volunteer, working with staff and other volunteers. Everyone is really friendly and I enjoy working with them, it's a great office to work in! I enjoy the work I do helping people. When you're a volunteer there is more of a willingness to work because you want to be there. It keeps me abreast of everyday happenings within our local community and the issues the local community are currently facing. We provide a source of information that people wouldn't normally be able to access. I enjoy the fact that we are able to work with people to get them to help themselves and empower themselves. Their self-esteem goes up and so does ours because we've helped someone". **Shirley***

Why volunteer?

Our volunteers come from a range of backgrounds and communities and volunteer with us for a range reasons, including to:

- make a positive impact on peoples' lives,
- gain new skills and knowledge and build experience for employment
- use and develop existing skills in varied and rewarding roles
- improve health, wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem
- meet new people from a range of backgrounds and ages, and make friends
- get to know the local community and give something back
- experience good training and support and to feel part of a team

We reimburse travel / other expenses so you won't be out of pocket from volunteering.

Our roles

As a volunteer at Citizens Advice you don't need any specific qualifications or experience.



You'll need to be friendly and approachable and have a respect for views, values and cultures that are different to your own.



Some roles may require you to have a basic IT skills, be a good listener, or have good written skills.



As a volunteer you'll receive an introduction to the service and training for your role, as well as support and supervision from our supervisors during your time volunteering with us, and opportunities for development.



Many of our public-facing roles take place in the day time (Mon - Fri 9am - 5pm) but we can be flexible with some of our other roles, which you could do in the evening or weekends. **Have a look at the volunteer roles in this pack for more information.**

How to get involved:

- > Read through our volunteer roles and decide which one(s) you're interested in
- > Complete a short application form
- > We'll invite you for an informal interview to discuss the role

This is nothing to worry about, it's a chance for you to find out more about the role, and Citizens Advice Copeland and decide if you'd like to volunteer with us.

It's also a chance for us to find out more about you and to see if the role you're interested in is a good fit for you.

Inclusive volunteering

The Citizens Advice service welcomes volunteers from all backgrounds. We believe that:

- the skills, experience and satisfaction benefits of volunteering should be available to everyone.
- a wide range of volunteers will lead to a wide range of opinions, priorities and perspectives which helps ensure our service understands and reflects our diverse communities.
- our service should be available to everyone that needs it. People will be more likely to use the service if they can relate to the people providing it.
- if we're supported by, involve and provide a service to a wide range of people, this will improve our partnership work as well as opportunities for bringing about positive change

The Citizens Advice service:

- Challenges discrimination through advice.
- Champions equality through research and campaigns.
- Values diversity as an employer and volunteer agency.

There are four equity groups within the Citizens Advice service:

- REACH (Race, Ethnicity and Cultural Heritage) Equity Group (previously known as the BAME Network Group)
- Disability Equity Group
- LGBTQ+ Equity Group
- Trans and Non-Binary Equity Group

All the equity groups welcome new members (in person and on Facebook Workplace).

Equity Groups are an important part of our work to create an inclusive and equitable service. Full Terms of Reference for the Equity groups can be found [here](#). You can join Equity groups via Workplace or speak to your supervisor.

Disabled volunteers

We want to make sure that you don't feel that your health condition or impairment is a barrier to volunteering with us. We actively welcome disabled volunteers and volunteers with long term health conditions, including mental health conditions.

Talk to us at any stage of the recruitment process about what support or equipment would enable you to volunteer with us, including physical requirements, time commitment or role flexibility.

Visit the national Citizens Advice [website](#) to find out about the experiences of some of our disabled volunteers.

Adviser



Volunteer advisers receive full training in the skills needed to help people deal with their problems and learn how to find the information the client needs from our extensive database. Volunteers are supported and supervised as they begin to give advice and will get feedback and development opportunities throughout their time with Citizens Advice. There are a variety of roles and tasks up to giving full advice.

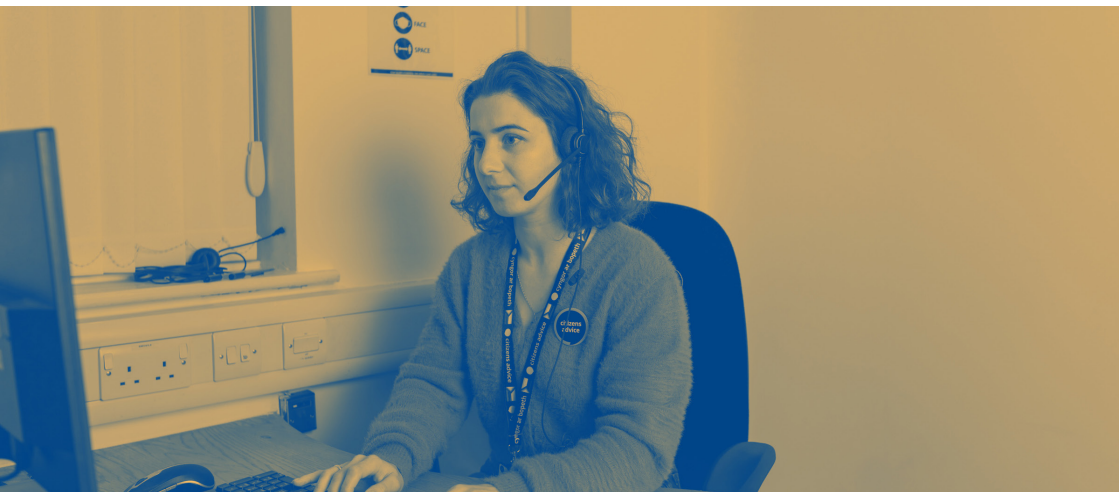
You don't need specific qualifications or experience to train for the role.

Our volunteers need:

- To be polite and good at listening
- To be familiar with using keyboard skills and searching the internet
- A good level of literacy and numeracy
- To be open minded and not judge clients
- To enjoy helping people



Time commitment: We can be flexible about the time spent and how often you volunteer so come and talk to us.





Financial Wellbeing volunteers



More and more local Citizens Advice centres are working in their communities to help people to improve how they manage their money by holding financial education sessions.

Our Financial Wellbeing volunteers are involved in the following:

- Holding training sessions on budgeting, borrowing, saving and banking
- Helping with national awareness events like Energy Savers Campaign, National Consumer Campaign and Scams Awareness Week
- Assisting the trainer
- Helping with marketing and publishing sessions
- Assist with email advice



Time commitment: We can be flexible about the time spent and how often you volunteer so come and talk to us.

Researchers and campaigners



By using evidence that Citizens Advice gets from our clients, you could help bring about changes in local and national policies and services which can benefit everyone – even those who have never used a local Citizens Advice before.

As part of the research and campaigns team you'll:

- Fill out and gather evidence forms which explains the detail of what our clients come to us about issues and completing
- Find out and raise relevant issues in the local Citizens Advice
- Train other staff and volunteers in finding out about issues and completing evidence forms
- Carry out research and write reports
- Get involved in media campaigning
- Work with other local Citizens Advice centres and organisations



Time commitment: We can be flexible about the time spent and how often you volunteer so come and talk to us.





Form Filling



As a form filler you will:

- complete an introduction to Citizens Advice and training for your role
- complete paper and online forms with clients
- write a summary of the clients' problems and what action you've taken

Some examples of the types of help you could give:

- support a client to make an application for a blue badge
- support a client to make an application for benefits including Personal Independence Payment
- support a client to register with Cumbria Choice for social housing.



Time commitment: We can be flexible about the time spent and how often you volunteer so come and talk to us.

Citizens Advice Copeland Champion



As a local champion you will help us to spread awareness of our service and the support we can offer throughout Copeland. By attending community events we can inform more people about the help available within Copeland as well as what we do and how we make a difference.

As a champion you will:

- complete and introduction to Citizens Advice and receive full training from us for your role.
- promote Citizens Advice Copeland at events throughout West Cumbria
- signpost to the organisation or refer people for appointments with our specialist advice teams
- talk to people about the services we provide and the help we can offer
- help to identify opportunities to promote Citizens Advice Copeland such as attending community groups and local organisations
- support us to deliver campaigns on issues that impact us such as scam awareness and energy saving



Time commitment: We can be flexible about the time spent and how often you volunteer so come and talk to us.

Fundraising volunteer



Each local Citizens Advice is an independent registered charity reliant on money from local authorities, companies, charitable trusts and individuals.

As a fundraiser you will:

- Work with the local Citizens Advice team to meet fundraising targets
- Help with researching fundraising opportunities
- Organise fundraising events
- Help fill out and submit fundraising applications
- Put together presentations to give to potential funders



Time commitment: We can be flexible about the time spent and how often you volunteer so come and talk to us.



Trustee



Trustees are volunteers who are expected to use their skills knowledge and experience to help guide and govern their local Citizens Advice. They work with the Chief Executive and other staff to shape strategy and give direction.

This includes making sure their local Citizens Advice is:

- Doing what it was set-up to do, such as offering high quality advice services to the local community
- Complying with the law, including upkeep or premises, insurance, recruitment and equipment
- Securing money to meet current and new demands, and that all funds are used responsibly
- Recognised and valued by local organisations, funders and people, who are aware of the vital service their local Citizens Advice provides

Attendance at regular meetings is expected by all trustees. Sometimes trustees will get involved in additional governance projects, such as supporting fundraising, developing strategy or overseeing HR procedures.

Within a board, some trustees will have a specific role, such as being the Chair, Treasurer or Secretary. These positions have defined responsibilities, such as chairing and facilitating meetings (Chair), overseeing the budget (Treasurer) and taking and circulating minutes (Secretary).

Ex-offenders

Citizens Advice have an ex-offenders policy to ensure that ex-offenders are treated fairly.

Having a criminal record is not in itself a barrier, and we will only take relevant convictions or sexual offences into account. We consider each offence individually, looking at issues like risk to the client, how long ago it took place, the circumstances and whether they are relevant to the volunteer role. Some roles may require DBS checks.

Anyone with a caution or conviction for a sexual offence against a child or vulnerable adult is considered unsuitable to volunteer.

We will ask about unspent convictions as part of the application process.

Expenses

Expenses are paid for volunteers travel to and from Citizens Advice Copeland on the day the volunteering takes place, and for any training courses. This includes parking.

So, volunteering with us will not leave you out of pocket. Only actual out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.

Will volunteering affect my benefits?

Volunteers who receive benefits, including means-tested benefits, are allowed to volunteer.

You may need to notify the provider of the benefit (e.g. Jobcentre Plus or HMRC) about volunteering.

You will need to continue to meet the conditions of your benefits claim.

There is more detailed information about specific benefits on the national Citizens Advice website in the [***Frequently Asked Questions***](#) section.

Come and join us!

To get involved, complete our application form.

Contact us by email advice@cacopeland.org or call **01946 693321** if you'd like to:

- Discuss a role that you're interested in that isn't in this pack
- Discuss individual support or equipment needs
- Discuss flexibility around time commitment
- Discuss flexibility around what the role involves
- Find out more about the training
- Ask us any questions about volunteering!

We look forward to hearing from you!



You can also find us on social media



Charity registration number 1080581

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