Generalist Caseworker

Job pack

Thank you for your interest in working at Citizens Advice Woking.

This job pack should give you everything you need to know to apply for this role and what it means to work at Citizens Advice.

- Our Purpose
- Three things you should know about us
- About Citizens Advice Woking
- The role profile and personal specification
- How to apply

We are excited to be recruiting for a new Caseworker to join our specialist team at Citizens Advice Woking. This is an exciting new role, funded through Surrey County Council's Crisis and Resilience Fund, offering an opportunity to make a real difference to people in our local community.

We are looking for a highly motivated person with recent experience of advising clients. You will need to demonstrate that you can manage a demanding caseload, work independently and keep on top of deadlines.

The successful candidate will provide casework across the full range of generalist advice areas, including welfare benefits, housing and debt advice.

Our purpose

We exist to shape a society where people face far fewer problems. Our national charity and network of local charities are united by this common purpose.

We're driven by our ambition to make things better for people, individually and collectively. We're driven by the power of good advice, to help people solve their problems. And we're driven to change the underlying causes of problems, through our work with governments and other organisations.

3 things you should know about us

- We're local and we're national. The national charity has 4 administrative offices in England and Wales supporting the work delivered by around 240 independent local Citizens Advice member Charities.

- We're here for everyone. Our advice helps people solve problems and our advocacy helps fix problems in society. Whatever the problem, we won't turn people away.

- We're listened to, and we make a difference. Our trusted brand and the quality of our research mean we make a real impact on behalf of the people who rely on us.

About Citizens Advice Woking

Citizens Advice Woking (CAW) is an independent local charity and a company limited by guarantee. We provide free, confidential, impartial, and independent advice and information for the benefit of the local community, to exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and to ensure individuals do not suffer through lack of knowledge or an inability to express their needs effectively.

CAW provides services in the following locations:

- **Woking Town Centre** (Provincial House, 26 Commercial Way, Woking GU21 6EN)
    - Telephone advice service via Surrey Adviceline: Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm
    - Drop-in sessions for initial assessments: Tuesday to Thursday, 10am to 1pm
    - Advice appointments: Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm
    - Specialist caseworker appointments, by arrangement: Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm

- **The Byfleet Methodist Church**, Rectory Lane, Byfleet, KT14 7LL
    - Funded by **United Byfleet Charity**
    - Drop-in sessions for initial assessments: Wednesday, 12 to 2.30pm

- **Ukrainian Hub**, Lighthouse, Woking, 8-10 High St, Woking, GU21 6BG
    - Funded by **Woking Borough Council**
    - Drop-in sessions for initial assessments, for the Ukrainian community: Tuesday, 10:30am to 2:30pm

- **The Mascot Hub,** Dartmouth Avenue, Sheerwater, Woking, GU21 6PE
    - Drop-in sessions for initial assessments: Thursday, 10am to 1pm

- **Sythwood** Salvation Army Community Church Woking GU21 3BE
  Fridays Weekly 10am – 12pm
  CAW provides a telephone service via Adviceline
  Monday – Friday 10am – 4pm

- **Shah Jahan Mosque**, 149 Oriental road Woking, GU22 7BA.

Funded by the National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund

  - Drop-in sessions for initial assessments, weekly - Mondays and Wednesdays, 10am–12pm (Exception: On the first Wednesday of each month, outreach will take place at the Canalside Community Fridge instead)

Canalside Community Fridge, 183 Boundary Road, Woking, GU21 5BU.

Funded by the National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund

  - Drop-in sessions for initial assessments, first Wednesday of each month, 11am–1pm.

We also run the following Projects on behalf of different funders:

- **I Access Community Drug and Alcohol Service**: Funding from Surrey and Borders NHS Trust to provide a generalist adviser to advise on all enquiry areas.

- **Trussell Trust Foodbank:** Funding to provide a generalist adviser at the Foodbank.

- **Refugee Support Funding** from Woking Borough Council to provide welfare benefit advice to support the Syrian and Refugee community and to provide generalist advice to the wider refugee community.

Governed by a Board of 9 trustees, we have a highly skilled workforce to support the organisation. This includes 16 paid staff and more than 42 volunteers.

Our generalist advice service is provided by volunteers who carry out reception and administrative duties, give information and advice and have research and campaign roles and are managed and supported by paid staff. We also have paid caseworkers in the areas of welfare benefits and housing.

Woking is often considered to be an affluent area with high levels of employment and rates of home ownership, however there are significant pockets of deprivation across the borough and our priority is to support the most vulnerable in our community. The main enquiry areas of welfare benefits, debt and housing continue to be the issues that most of our clients need help with.

Role profile

Key work areas and tasks:

- Ensure income maximisation through the take up of benefits and give debt advice where needed.
- Provide casework covering the full range of welfare benefits, including disability benefits and appeals.
- Act for the client where necessary by calculating, negotiating, drafting or writing letters or telephoning third parties.
- Negotiate with third parties as appropriate.
- Prepare and present cases to the relevant statutory bodies, tribunals, or courts.
- Assist clients with other related problems where they are an integral part of their case and refer to other advisers or specialist agencies as appropriate.
- Ensure that all casework conforms to Citizens Advice Quality Advice Assessment standards.
- Maintain case records for the purpose of continuity of casework, information retrieval, statistical monitoring, and report preparation.
- Ensure that all work conforms to the office's systems and procedures.

Research and Campaigns

- Assist with Research and Campaign work by providing information about clients' circumstances where legislation or guidance is having an adverse impact on the client.
- Provide regular reports and statistical information on the number of clients and nature of cases.
- Monitor service provision to ensure that it reaches the widest client group possible.
- Alert other staff to local and national issues.

Continuous Professional development

- Keep up to date with legislation, case law, guidance, policies and procedures relating to welfare benefits and undertake appropriate training in all advice areas.
- Read relevant publications.
- Attend relevant internal and external meetings as agreed with your manager.

- Prepare for and attend supervision sessions/team meetings/management meetings and staff meetings as appropriate.
- Assist with service initiatives for the improvement of services.

Other duties and responsibilities

- Carry out any other tasks that may be within the scope of the post to ensure the effective delivery and development of the service.
- Demonstrate commitment to the aims and policies of the Citizens Advice service.
- Abide by health and safety guidelines and share responsibility for own safety and that of colleagues.

Person specification

Essential Criteria

1. Knowledge and experience of welfare benefit advice – training will be provided.

2. Effective oral communication skills with particular emphasis on negotiating and representing.

3. Effective writing skills with particular emphasis on preparing reviews, reports, and correspondence, and negotiating and advocating on behalf of clients.

4. Ordered approach to casework and an ability and willingness to follow and develop agreed procedures.

5. Understand the issues involved in interviewing clients.

6. Must be able to demonstrate a level of numeracy suitable for the role.

7. Ability to prioritise your own work, meet deadlines and manage caseload.

8. Ability to use IT in the provision of advice and the preparation of reports and submissions.

9. Ability to give and receive feedback objectively and sensitively and a willingness to challenge constructively.

10. Ability and willingness to work as part of a team.

11. Ability to monitor and maintain own standards.

Desirable Criteria

1. Understanding of and commitment to the aims and principles of the Citizens Advice service and its equity, diversity and inclusion policies.

2. Experience of working sensitively with clients with mental health issues.

Terms of Appointment

Job Title:	**Generalist Caseworker**
Location:	**Citizens Advice Woking – office, community outreach and home working.**
Hours:	**37.5 per week Monday – Friday**
Salary:	**£28,080 - £31,200 per annum dependent on experience**
Holiday:	**25 days annual leave (FTE) plus public holidays**
Contract term:	**2 years, fixed term.**

How to apply

To apply for the role of generalist caseworker, please send us your CV and a maximum 2 page supporting statement.

The supporting statement should demonstrate **how you meet the criteria outlined in the person specification** and outline why you are interested in becoming a generalist caseworker at Citizens Advice Woking.

All applications must be sent to **wokingca@gmail.com**

Closing date for applications: Friday 30th October at 5pm

Applications will be reviewed on receipt on a rolling basis and we reserve the right to close earlier if applications from sufficient suitably qualified candidates have been received.