Frequently Asked Questions

If you have a specific question that isn't covered here then we’ll be more than happy to chat to you. Fill out the quick online enquiry form or give us a call.

What will I get out of volunteering?

All our volunteers get something different from their volunteering experience. Some of the most common benefits reported are:

* making a positive difference to peoples' lives
* receiving high quality training
* getting invaluable work experience
* developing new skills such as communication, problem solving, analytical skills, IT etc.
* using existing skills and knowledge in a new environment
* improving self esteem, confidence and wellbeing
* getting to know the community better
* meeting new people from a range of backgrounds
* making friends
* feeling valued and part of a team
* making a positive contribution to the community
* changing the way things work for the better

Read our [volunteer stories](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/support-us/volunteering/volunteering_disabilities/) to hear from our volunteers and what they get out of it.

What age restrictions are there on volunteering?

The minimum age for Citizens Advice volunteer advisers is 16. There is no upper age limit for volunteers. If you are under 18 years old we will discuss with you how you may be able to meet the regular volunteering commitment requirements when you apply.

**What support will I get as a volunteer?**

Volunteers are fully supported and supervised throughout their time at Citizens Advice. Once you have completed an induction to our organisation you will be allocated a volunteer coordinator to support you day to day, and with any training you may be doing. We will work with you to help ensure that you find volunteering with us rewarding.

If you are an adviser, there is an Advice Session Supervisor on duty at each advice session to guide and support you. We make sure that you're not put in situations that are beyond your abilities and that there is someone there to support you if you need it.

**How much time do I need to give?**

We understand volunteers have many interests and demands on their times. You may work shifts, have caring responsibilities, have a changing university timetable or have regular commitments. We offer a flexible approach to volunteering, ideally we would like volunteers to commit to 8 hours per week, particularly during their initial training to help you progress and complete your training. We however recognise that this may not always be possible every week. We will talk to you about the volunteering commitment during the application process and any flexible arrangements. Please note, advisers will need to be available to volunteer during our office hours.

I've recently been a client or accessed the Citizens Advice service, can I volunteer?

Former clients can, and do, make excellent volunteers in a range of roles. Having lived experience can give you really valuable insight into what it’s like to access the Citizens Advice service. Depending on when you last accessed the service, we might suggest a break before you become a volunteer, but we can discuss this with you when you apply.

Will volunteering affect my benefits?

If you are in receipt of benefits, including means-tested benefits, you are fully entitled to volunteer for as many hours as you wish, as long as you continue to keep to the rules or conditions for getting that benefit.

Please talk to us about your individual circumstances, we can discuss this with you when you apply and provide you with support if required.

We can help you by providing a standard letter confirming that the role is a volunteer one, the number of hours you are volunteering, that these hours are unpaid and that you're only receiving actual out-of-pocket expenses.

For more information about things to consider when taking up volunteering see this helpful [NCVO guidance](https://www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering/volunteering-and-benefits).

What skills do I require and is training given?

All volunteers receive an induction when joining our local Citizens Advice. All advisers receive comprehensive, free, high quality training. Currently due to coronavirus restrictions our training consists of working through study packs remotely with regular contact from our volunteer coordinators. There is some group work via video conferencing and we encourage you to join our ‘group hangouts’ with other trainee volunteers. You will also observe our advisers in their roles.

You'll receive support throughout your training and when you undertake your volunteer role. We find that most people complete the full adviser training in12 months, although this will, of course, depend on how much time you are able to commit to it.

Will volunteering help me get a job?

Around 30% of our volunteers who leave go on to paid employment. Local Citizens Advice volunteering provides skills and experience that is valued by many employers.

Many of our staff, for example managers, case workers and administrators, started out as volunteers.

Will I get my expenses paid?

We will reimburse reasonable travel to and from training sessions and travel to and from the office should you be an office based volunteer. We will chat to you further during the recruitment process about what expenses we can reimburse.