



Lewisham

# Volunteer Telephone Assessor

As a Volunteer Telephone Assessor you will provide information to members of the public over the phone to help with the wide range of problems they face. Topics range from debt and housing queries to immigration. Currently, we are experiencing a high volume of calls from people seeking information on their employment rights, claiming Universal Credit and housing matters as a result of the ongoing Covid-19 crisis.

Volunteer Telephone Assessor is a diverse role and you'll not be expected to know it all. You will undergo an intensive 13 week remote training programme, which will help in developing the skills and knowledge needed to deliver an excellent level of service to our clients. Once you have progressed to taking calls you will be fully supported by a Supervisor throughout your volunteering shift.

In light of the current Covid-19 crisis, this role is more important than ever to provide vital information to those who have been adversely affected.

We are looking for volunteers who are able to give a minimum commitment of 9 months and unfortunately we are unable to accept any applications from individuals who cannot commit to this timeframe.

To volunteer in this role you must have a personal laptop or PC, a private and secure internet connection and a confidential space in which to perform the role.



## What will you do?

- complete a comprehensive 13 week training and induction so you are confident in your role
- talk to clients over the phone or online to explore what problems they've come for help with
- find information about the clients' problems and help them to understand their options and next steps

- provide information to clients to enable them to take the appropriate action themselves or refer the client to another organisation such as Free Representation Unit (FRU)
- write clear and accurate summaries of the clients' problems and what action you've taken
- look out for problems that are common, or are unfair, and write a short report about the problem to contribute to the Research and Campaigns work of Citizens Advice

Some examples of what you could do:

- find the information online that explains how to apply for Housing Benefit in a client's local area and explain it to them
- identify what steps a client can take to resolve their problem with a second hand car
- help a client find and understand what steps they can take to deal with their rent arrears
- Provide information and guidance to a nurse whose landlord wants to evict her for fear of her contracting and spreading the coronavirus to the landlord's other tenants

This role will give you a good foundation in our work. After approximately 9 months as a Telephone Assessor, there may be opportunities for you to develop in other areas of advicework (which can vary depending on the individual and the needs of the organisation).



## What's in it for you?

- have a positive impact in your community
- learn about a range of issues such as benefits, debt and housing
- build on valuable skills such as communication, listening and analysing
- contribute to the smooth running of the Citizens Advice Lewisham services and make a real impact on people's day to day lives
- work with a range of different people, independently and in a friendly and supportive team
- increase your employability – gain experience and skills to add to your CV and promote to future employers
- potential developmental opportunities to train in other areas of advicework where you can further your knowledge and experience
- become a part of the amazing volunteer effort in response to Covid-19



## What do you need to have?

You will need to have a personal laptop and PC, a private, secure internet connection and a confidential space to perform the role. You also need to be able to commit to a minimum period of 9 months volunteering for 2 days per week.

You don't need specific qualifications but you'll need to:

- be able to work from home and independently but still within the boundaries of Citizens Advice and the role
- have a confidential working space and adhere to the Great Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Citizens Advice confidentiality guidelines
- be friendly and approachable
- have the ability to multitask
- have excellent listening skills
- have good verbal and written communication skills
- have good maths and IT skills
- be able to understand complex or detailed information and explain it to others simply and in plain English
- be non-judgmental and respect views, values and cultures that are different to your own
- be willing to learn about and follow the Citizens Advice aims, principles and policies, including confidentiality and data protection
- be willing to undertake training in your role and be self-disciplined to undertake learning independently



## How much time do you need to give?

We are looking for volunteers who are available Monday to Friday during the day (9.30am - 4pm). Please note we are closed evenings and weekends.

We expect all new volunteers to complete a 13 week compulsory induction for two days each week, which can be undertaken remotely. One day must be a Thursday, which is our training day.

During your induction you will be fully supported by staff at Citizens Advice Lewisham who will guide you through the aims, principles and policies of Citizens Advice and the learning for the role. We ideally ask for a commitment of 2 days per week for at least 9 months.



## Valuing inclusion

Citizens Advice Lewisham is committed to equality and diversity and we recognise that we can learn from people with different backgrounds, skills, and experiences to meet the needs of our clients most effectively. Therefore we welcome individuals from all backgrounds to apply for our volunteer roles.



## Commitment to Safer Recruitment

Citizen Advice Lewisham is committed to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults. As you will be working with members of the community who may be vulnerable, this role is subject to two references and a DBS check. Please note that a criminal conviction will not necessarily prevent you from volunteering in this role. Please contact us using the details below to discuss any concerns around these checks.



## Contact details

If you are interested in becoming a Volunteer Telephone Assessor and would like to discuss this role further, please contact us via [volunteering@citizensadvicelewisham.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@citizensadvicelewisham.org.uk)

## Next Steps

Please apply via the [Application Form](#). If your application is shortlisted we will invite you to complete a Selection Tasks and Interview. We will be in touch about your application in the next few weeks.