

# Volunteer Applicant FAQs

## 1. Who are Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts?

- Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts (CADD) is a voluntary organisation and a registered charity.
- We are part of a national network of Local Citizens Advice who are members of National Citizens Advice and are locally operated and governed.

## 2. What does Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts do?

- Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts provides independent, impartial, free and confidential information and advice to give people the knowledge and confidence they need to find their way forward – whoever they are, whatever the problem, such as benefits, debt, employment, housing, relationships and immigration.
- We use our knowledge about our clients' problems to identify trends and campaign to improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives.
- We help people in a range of ways including face to face at office and outreach locations, over the phone, by email and webchat.

## 3. How is Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts funded?

- As a charity, we are funded from a variety of sources, including from National Citizens Advice, local authorities, lottery funds, Clinical Commissioning Groups, local trusts and foundations and other fundraising activities.

## 4. What will I get out of volunteering with Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts?

- People volunteer with Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts for a range of 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; these may include interview skills, negotiation skills, record keeping and teamwork
- 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

## **5. Is volunteering available to everyone?**

- Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts believes that the skills, experience and satisfaction that come from volunteering should be available to everyone.
- We have a diverse workforce, and we actively encourage applications for volunteer roles from all parts of the community, including Black Asian Minority Ethnic (BAME) volunteers, disabled volunteers, volunteers with physical and mental health conditions, LGBT+ and non-binary volunteers.
- We encourage inclusive volunteering by focusing on matching volunteer roles available with your qualities, skills and interests. We have both client facing and non-client facing volunteer roles which are based either over the telephone or face to face.
- Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is integral to all we do as a service, not only for our clients, but also for our staff and volunteers.
- We want to make sure that volunteers don't feel that there are barriers to volunteering with us if they have a health condition or impairment. 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.

## **6. Do I need any specific qualifications or experience to volunteer?**

- As a volunteer at Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts, you don't need any specific qualifications or experience.
- You'll need to be able to work as part of a team, be punctual and reliable and have a respect for views, values and cultures that are different to your own.
- Volunteer roles require you to have basic IT skills, have good written skills and be a good listener.
- We ask for a minimum commitment of 4-6 hours a week but will be as flexible as possible in the roles and hours we offer. We discuss this further at the recruitment event but please check the roles document or contact

us directly if you have any questions about commitment in the meantime.

- 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.

## **7. What is the process for becoming a volunteer?**

- To become a volunteer with Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts you need to:
  - Read through our volunteer roles and decide which one(s) you're interested in and then complete the application form.
  - We'll invite you to an informal telephone interview and information session to find out more about volunteering with Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts. This is nothing to worry about, it's a chance for you to find out more about the role and Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts. 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.
  - Prior to volunteering, all applicants are expected to complete induction training and a DBS check, which we will pay for. Induction training will usually include around 18 hours of training with a training officer, some self-study online and shadowing more experienced volunteers before undertaking your role with close support from a supervisor. There is also ongoing training provided once you have started in your role.

## **8. Will I get paid expenses?**

- Expenses are paid for volunteers travelling to and from a Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts office, up to 15 miles. We also pay travel for any training courses, arranged by us.
- Expenses covered include parking, bus fares and car mileage. Volunteering with us should not leave you out of pocket.
- They are paid once a month.
- Only reasonable, actual out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed. Talk to us if you have any questions about expenses.

## **9. Can I take holidays while volunteering?**

- We understand that our volunteers will have other demands on their time, such as childcare, employment or travel opportunities. While we ask you to commit to a regular weekly session, we can be flexible around leave, but we ask that you communicate with your supervisor in advance about any planned absence so that the service is not disrupted.

## **10. 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.

## **11. Can I still volunteer if I have a criminal record?**

- 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 clients, how long ago it took place, the circumstances and whether they are relevant to the volunteer role.
- 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. If you're concerned or would like to discuss your individual circumstances further, please contact us.

## **12. Can I volunteer while I am a client of Citizens Advice Derbyshire Districts?**

- Unfortunately, clients currently receiving assistance from us cannot also volunteer with us at the same time as this could create a conflict of interest.
- Once you are no longer our client, however, we would welcome an application from you.