Citizens Advice
South Warwickshire

Recruitment Pack

Prepared April 2018

Contents

1. Introduction from Chair of Trustee Board - Page 3
2. About Citizens Advice South Warwickshire - Page 5
3. How to Apply - Page 10
4. Selection Process - Page 10
5. Job Description/Person Specification - Page 13

1. Introduction from Yvonne Hunter, Chair of Trustee Board

Thank you for your interest in applying for the role of Advice Session Supervisor at Citizens Advice South Warwickshire. Citizens Advice South Warwickshire (CASW) is an independent charity. It is a recently merged service covering the local authority districts of Warwick and Stratford-upon-Avon. We now serve a population of a quarter of a million and last year we helped over 9000 people to solve their individual problems.

The world is changing quickly. Most people's incomes haven't grown for years or are being squeezed by inflation and welfare reform. Many people are struggling to pay back debts and tackle employment, family, consumer, housing and other issues.

We aim to be the trusted, go-to organisation providing top quality advice and information. We are committed to equality, diversity and challenging discrimination. We continually develop our services, and make sure that we are delivering appropriate and relevant advice to those who need it, whether face to face, by telephone, via our website or out in the community.

We are always looking for ways to improve our services and work more closely with partners. This means new opportunities to experiment locally through co-design and partnerships across a range of different sectors.

CASW is highly regarded locally for working in partnership at all levels and this is reflected in our funding arrangements and project work.

Looking ahead, our clients face some major challenges - perhaps the biggest of these is the introduction of Universal Credit alongside further welfare reforms.

We have a dedicated volunteer and staff base and high quality services that change the lives of thousands of people each year.

Thank you for your interest in joining Citizens Advice South Warwickshire at what is a very exciting time for us. We look forward to receiving your application.

Yvonne Hunter

2. About Citizens Advice South Warwickshire

Our people

- Citizens Advice South Warwickshire has a Trustee Board of twelve people who are all volunteers. Our Trustees bring a wide range of professional skills and knowledge and insight of the district to the planning of the service. The Trustees, in conjunction with the CEO, are ultimately responsible for setting the strategy and budget for the service. Day to day running and further development of the organisation is the responsibility of the CEO who, alongside a senior management team, oversees the delivery of our services.

- CASW has 29 paid staff members (approx 20 FTE) and is proud to have in excess of 150 volunteers working in various roles. These roles include reception and administration, generalist advice, supervisors, money advice, research and campaigns work, grant finder, financial capability, money mentors, IT support and more. These volunteer roles have expanded in recent years and the service is actively developing volunteers to support its offer.

- CASW operates from two main locations, in Leamington Spa and Stratford-upon-Avon town centres. In order to reach people who find travelling around our large urban and rural catchment area difficult, we have outreach offices in 11 locations around the district. We also deliver advice and information by telephone from the Stratford-upon-Avon office, and a home visiting service for those who would otherwise find access difficult.

Our clients

- On many indices of deprivation South Warwickshire can be defined as a low need / high income area. This masks significant pockets of deprivation, rural challenges of isolation, access to services and work, significant fuel poverty and affordability, especially in relation to housing.

Some key facts about South Warwickshire:

- The two South Warwickshire districts are above the Warwickshire average for the measure of housing affordability, with Stratford-upon-Avon residents needing nearly nine times their income to afford the lowest priced housing. This District has the

highest numbers of people claiming housing benefit who are affected by the new under-occupancy rules. It has the highest number of Lower Super Output Areas in the top 30% of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (2015) under the 'barriers to housing and services' domain.

- Cases advised by our staff in CASW where there was legal housing repossession action taken against our clients (which threatened homelessness) have significantly increased in three years. Across the two offices in 2014/15 there were 185 cases, a slight dip was seen in 2015/16 with 176 cases, but a sharp increase of over 500 cases recorded in 2016/17.

- 24% of our clients are in rented accommodation. (6119 households are in socially rented properties with 5885 in private sector rented properties). This has seen a marked increase of 60% in the last 10 years.

- In Warwick District the majority of socially rented properties are local authority owned – some 5337 (2700 homes are via other social landlords including Orbit), and nearly 10,000 properties are private sector rented (influenced by a high student population) – a figure that has more than doubled in the last ten years.

- 25% of the population is aged 65 years and over in South Warwickshire. Stratford-upon-Avon is projected to see a 206% increase in the number of residents aged 85+ years, while Warwick District is projected to see an increase of 141%.

- The population in each District is largely White British – with 93.6% in Stratford-upon-Avon District and 83.4% in Warwick District. Warwick District has the highest non White British population in Warwickshire. In Stratford-upon-Avon, the next highest proportion of residents are of Polish, German, USA and Australian origin, and in Warwick District they are of Portuguese, African and Asian (mainly Indian) origin.

- Fuel poverty levels have risen across Warwickshire with the highest pockets of need located in rural areas, specifically in Stratford-upon-Avon District. Rising fuel prices and continued pressures on incomes are seen as the main reasons why these increases have occurred.

The difference we make

- We make an amazing difference to the lives of the people of South Warwickshire. What we do is often life-changing and sometimes life-saving. In 2017-18 we delivered our advice and advocacy to over 9,000 people and advised on over 25,000 issues.

- Factors impacting on people's lives include welfare benefit changes, debt, housing repossessions and local issues such as transport and the high cost of housing in our area. We work with local authorities, third sector partners, housing providers and many other agencies to mitigate the effects of sickness, bereavement, unemployment, disability, relationship breakdown and many other issues people face.

- Benefits and debt are the two highest demand advice areas for our service followed by housing and employment. There has been a sharp increase in the number of people seeking help following a decision to decline or not renew disability and incapacity benefits. We are finding that this is a particular issue faced by those with mental health issues.

- Over the last 5 years we have seen a marked increase in the prevalence of priority debts such as Council Tax and rent arrears and after seeing a significant reduction of unsecured credit over this period we are now once more witnessing growth in the numbers of people seeking advice with these debts.

- As discussed above, housing and threatened homelessness is also a significant and growing problem. In 2016 - 17 we advised over 500 families facing repossession action and 108 cases of actual homelessness.

- The introduction of Universal Credit full service in Stratford-upon-Avon in December 2017 has also exacerbated the threat of repossession action from landlords because of the 6 - 8 weeks waiting period for the housing costs component of the benefit. Universal Credit will go full service in Warwick District from November 2018.

Our funding and projects

- We have a wide range of funding sources. This includes income from Warwickshire County Council, Warwick and Stratford District Councils and a number of town and parish councils. This income is awarded via direct grants and through commissioned contracts.

- We have also been very successful at drawing down further income from grant and project funding bodies including: the Big Lottery Fund, Henry Smith Trust, Oken Trust, Orbit Housing, Money Advice Service and many more. This income is approximately three times the funding from local authorities.

Our partnerships

- We held an exceptionally successful multi-agency event in November 2017. The event looked at how to better support our communities in partnership with funders and other partners. The success of this event helped to position our service at the centre of all of those working to achieve positive, long-term outcomes for the people of South Warwickshire.

Our local research and campaigns

- The stories our clients tell us provide us with a unique insight into the problems faced by people living in South Warwickshire. We are able to spot developing trends and this helps us to create campaigns and speak up for our clients to those in decision-making roles. By raising issues nationally we can create a public debate, change things for the better and help many more people than those that contact us.

- We are currently working locally on issues around access to public transport in rural areas; the reasons why people use food banks; the impact recent welfare benefit changes have had on income and access to disability benefits. More information about Citizens Advice national campaigns can be found on the national website. www.citizensadvice.org.uk.

- Our R&C team are also working with clients on the co-design of our service delivery. This has helped us to understand and remove potential barriers to our service in relation to access.

Our website

- Please visit our website for further information about our service. www.casouthwarwickshire.org.uk.

3. The role of Advice Session Supervisor

Salary
The role is paid at NJC PT29 currently £25,951 FTE, subject to a service job evaluation exercise

Normal place of work
You will be expected to work across both main sites at:

10 Hamilton Terrace, Leamington Spa CV32 4LY
25 Meer Street, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6QB

Additional travel will be required for which expenses will be paid.

Hours of work
18.5 hours a week, with occasional requirements to attend meetings etc. in the evenings.

Annual leave
CASW offers 25 days of annual leave in addition to the 8 UK statutory Bank and Public Holidays set dates

Pension
You will be auto-enrolled into CASW pension scheme (The People's Pension). You have the right to opt out of this scheme.

As employer CASW currently pays a 3% employer contribution with an additional 2% minimum employee contribution.

References and clearance
Any offer of employment will be subject to satisfactory references and completion of a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) reference.

Health clearance
Any offer of employment will be subject to satisfactory completion of a health questionnaire. Should you disclose any health issues any offer of employment will be subject to a satisfactory assessment by Occupational Health.

4. How to Apply

The closing date for applications is: **9:00am Tuesday 29th May 2018**.

Interview dates to be confirmed

This Application Pack, which includes job description, person specification, guidance notes and Application Form can be downloaded from our website at:
http://www.casouthwarwickshire.org.uk/category/vacancies/

- Please read the application guidance document before completing your application.

- Email your completed forms to: recruitment@casouthwarwickshire.org.uk

5. Selection Process

- After the closing date we will consider all applications carefully and invite those candidates for interview who, from the information available, appear to be the best suited for the post. It is important therefore that your application gives a full but concise description of the nature, level and extent of the responsibilities you have held.

- In your application please explain specifically how you meet the criteria outlined in the person specification. You may write this in the application form or in a separate document if you prefer. Please do not send a CV as we will not consider this.

- We will contact you by letter or email depending on your preference, and if you are selected for interview we will send you details of the interview process.

Data protection

- We will use your application only to inform the selection process. Applications are kept on record for 6 months after they are destroyed. If you are successful, it will form the basis of your personnel record with us and we will store it in a paper file. We will hold any data about you in completely secure conditions with restricted access.

- We will include data that you provide on the diversity monitoring form in a general database for statistical monitoring purposes only enabling us to monitor the effectiveness of our policy on Equal Opportunities and Employment. Individuals will not be identified by name.

- We consider that by submitting the enclosed forms you are giving your consent to the processing of your data in the ways described above.

Equality

- We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination. We encourage and welcome applications from suitably skilled applicants from all backgrounds.

Nationality and Immigration Control

- This post is open to nationals of states within the British Commonwealth and the European Economic Area (EEA). There must be no employment restriction or time limit on your permitted stay in the UK.

Informal visits

- Informal visits to either of our main offices are welcome, or you may arrange an informal telephone discussion.

To do either of the above please contact:
Jenny Harding : jenny.harding@casouthwarwickshire.org.uk

6. Job Description

Advice Session Supervisor

Context of role
Citizens Advice South Warwickshire has recently celebrated its first year of a merger between Warwick District and Stratford Upon Avon. The Advice Session Supervisor will join a strong and effective team working across both sites to support and supervise the delivery of advice across the whole service.

Role purpose
To maintain the delivery of excellent quality of advice through line management and supervision of volunteers.

Supervising advice sessions and / or casework

- Manage the practicalities of the advice session and ensure adequate staffing and resources.
- Provide an appropriate level of support and supervision to individual workers depending on their level of competence.
- Monitor the case records / telephone calls of designated staff to meet quality standards and service level agreements.
- Ensure remedial and developmental issues are identified and acted on to develop individuals, improve the quality of advice, and ensure clients do not suffer detriment due to poor or inadequate advice.
- Keep technical knowledge up to date and provide technical support to advisers and / or caseworkers.
- Contribute to morning brief – bureau updates, social events, reminders of Tuesday Training, changes to partner services, Expert Advice Team updates and other legislative changes, social policy calls for evidence, positive client outcomes (other Session Supervisors and ASM to suggest contributions)

Learning, development and training

- Contribute to the assessment of competence of designated staff.
- Identify training and development needs through appraisals.

General

- Undertake advice work as required.

- Keep up to date with Citizens Advice aims, policies and procedures and ensure these are followed.
- Ensure that work reflects and supports the Citizens Advice service's equality and diversity strategy.
- Keep up to date with research and campaigns issues and ensure research and campaigns is promoted and integrated in a way relevant to the role.
- Develop and maintain effective admin systems and records relevant to the role.
- Monitor and evaluate activities appropriate to the role and contribute to the bureau planning process by providing regular reports and feedback on the areas of responsibility.
- Attend regular bureau and external meetings relevant to the role (staff, team, management, trustee board, consortium etc).
- Work cooperatively with colleagues and encourage good teamwork, clear lines of communication and common practices within the bureau team.
- Abide by health and safety guidelines and share responsibility for own health and safety and that of colleagues.
- Identify own learning and development needs and take steps to address these.
- Carry out any other tasks within the scope of the post to ensure the effective delivery and development of the service.
- Keep a note of trends in enquiries/social policy issues regularly coming in and report to management/other supervisors at monthly supervisor meetings
- Communicate with admin team re. updates required to leaflets, referral forms and contacts lists, posters on the walls
- Communicate with Office Administrator re. stationery and other office items required
- Research Casebook records where a client has complained and feed back to ASM/Manager re. the history of the case
- Support advisers with IT including using the rota, changing Casebook passwords, unlocking enquiry notes/gateways on Petra and amending where necessary.

Networking and partnerships

- Develop links with relevant statutory and non-statutory agencies relevant to the role.

- Use influencing skills to promote the bureau and foster good relationships with external organisations.

Person specification

- Ability to commit to, and work within, the aims, principles and policies of the Citizens Advice service.

- A good, up to date understanding of equality and diversity and its application to the provision of advice, and the supervision and development of staff.

- Proven ability to give and receive feedback objectively and sensitively and a willingness to challenge constructively.

- Ability to communicate effectively verbally and in writing.

- Demonstrable understanding of the issues affecting society and their implications for clients and service provision.

- Demonstrable understanding of the issues involved in interviewing clients.

- Proven ability to manage / supervise others, including ability to recruit, develop and motivate staff.

- Proven ability to supervise and monitor advice work and to maintain casework systems and procedures.

- Ability to research, analyse and interpret complex information and produce and present clear reports verbally and in writing.

- Ability to prioritise own work and the work of others, meet deadlines and manage workload in a busy environment.

- Ability to use IT systems and packages, and electronic resources in the provision of advice and the preparation of reports and submissions.

- Ability to monitor and maintain recording systems and procedures.

- A commitment to continuous professional development.

- Ability and willingness to work and contribute to a positive, collaborative and supportive team environment with other members of staff

Citizens Advice South Warwickshire
Free, confidential advice.
Whoever you are.

We help people overcome their problems and campaign on big issues when their voices need to be heard. We value diversity, champion equality, and challenge discrimination and harassment. We're here for everyone.

Citizens Advice South Warwickshire is a company limited by guarantee registered number 5252247. Registered office 10 Hamilton Terrace, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV32 4LY. Registered charity number 1106631. Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority, FRN 617786. Telephone 01926 457910. Fax 01926 457905. E-mail aidan.knox@casouthwarwickshire.org.uk Website: www.casouthwarwickshire.org.uk

citizensadvice.org.uk