



Citizens Advice South Warwickshire

Recruitment Pack

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1. Introduction from Yvonne Hunter, Chair of Trustee Board

Thank you for your interest in applying for a role working for 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 with 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 Outreach Adviser

Salary

The role is paid at NJC PT25 currently £22,658 FTE, subject to a service job evaluation exercise

Normal place of work

You will be expected to work across sites at:

25 Meer Street, Stratford-upon-Avon CV37 6QB and 1 or 2 Outreach venues

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

Hours of work

Either 7.5 or 15 hours depending on undertaking 1 or 2 outreach sessions. 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:

Chief Executive, Aidan Knox : aidan.knox@casouthwarwickshire.org.uk

6. Job Description

Outreach Worker

Context of role:

Outreach Worker for the Stratford-upon-Avon District area working from one or two outreach offices locations as required across Stratford District, with a central base at 25 Meer Street, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 6QB for one of two days per week.

Role purpose:

To provide advice services to the residents of Stratford District

Key work areas and tasks:

Advice giving

- Interview clients using sensitive listening and questioning skills in order to allow clients to explain their problem(s) and empower them to set their own priorities.
- Use the Citizens Advice Information System to find, interpret and communicate the relevant information.
- Research and explore options and implications so that clients can make informed decisions.
- Act for the client where necessary by calculating, negotiating, drafting or writing letters, form filling and telephoning.
- Negotiate with third parties such as statutory and non-statutory bodies as appropriate.
- Refer internally or to other specialist agencies as appropriate.
- Ensure that all work conforms to the bureau's Office Manual and the Legal Services Commission's Quality Mark at the appropriate level.
- Maintain detailed case records for the purpose of continuity of casework, information retrieval, statistical monitoring and report preparation

Social policy

- Assist with social policy work by providing information about clients' circumstances through the appropriate channel.
- Alert clients to social policy options

Professional development

- Keep up to date with legislation, policies and procedures and undertake appropriate training.
- Read relevant publications.
- Attend relevant internal and external meetings as agreed with the line manager.
- Prepare for and attend supervision sessions/team meetings/staff meetings as appropriate.

Administration

- Use IT for statistical recording, record keeping and document production.
- Ensure that all work conforms to the bureau's systems and procedures.
- Provide statistical information on the number of clients and nature of cases

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 CAB service.
- Abide by health and safety guidelines and share responsibility for own safety and that of colleagues.

Person specification

- Understanding of and commitment to the aims and principles of the CAB service and its equal opportunities policies.
- Ability to give and receive feedback objectively and sensitively and a willingness to challenge constructively.
- Ability to monitor and maintain own standards.
- Effective written and oral communication skills with particular emphasis on negotiating.
- Understanding of the issues involved in interviewing clients.
- Understanding of the issues affecting society and their implications for clients and service provision.
- Ability to use IT in the provision of advice.
- Flexibility and willingness to work as part of a team.
- Willingness to learn and develop skills in advice topics.
- Ability to research, analyse and interpret complex information.
- Numeracy skills required to understand statistics and check calculations.

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

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