

**Volunteer Cost of Living Information Assistant**

**Role Profile**



**What will you do?**

* Complete an introduction to Citizens Advice and bespoke training for your role
* Be based in the community, particularly in Welcoming Spaces, supporting people who are affected by the cost of living crisis
* Undertake initial exploratory interviews to understand a client's situation and priorities
* Develop the skills to identify emergencies, including debt emergencies, and know how to respond to offer the client the best support
* Use the Citizen’s Advice external website and other associated websites to research the best options for each individual
* Help clients better understand their finances and get appropriate support for their situation
* Write a summary of the clients’ problems and what action you’ve taken and record it on the Citizens’s Advice recording system
* You will **not** give specialist advice and will **not** work without the support of a supervisor

**Some examples of what you could do:**

* Help a client to identify possible entitlement to Welfare Benefits and support them to check their entitlement online.
* Identify a debt emergency that requires immediate action, and support the clients to access regulated debt advice
* Discuss income and spending with a client and together draw up a personal budget
* Help a client understand their utility bills and discuss possible cost reductions, such as grants, support schemes or energy saving methods

**Valuing inclusion**

Citizens Advice Bristol 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 minoritised ethnic volunteers, disabled volunteers, volunteers with physical and mental health conditions and LGBTQIA+ volunteers.



**What’s in it for you?**

* Be part of the city’s response to the cost of living crisis
* Make a positive impact on peoples’ lives
* Gain new skills/knowledge through training and build experience for employment and have the opportunity to progress into advice roles
* Skills and knowledge developed could include:
  + Interview skills
  + Knowledge of welfare benefits, housing, immigration and employment
  + Advocacy skills
  + Greater knowledge of local services
  + Research skills
* Opportunities for group and peer supervision during period of volunteering, and to feel part of a team
* Use and develop existing skills in varied and rewarding roles
* You will have a supervisor available at all times when you are volunteering
* 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
* And we’ll reimburse expenses

**What do you need to have?**

* You don’t need specific qualifications or skills but you’ll need to:
* Be friendly and approachable
* Be non-judgmental and respect views, values and cultures that are different to your own
* Have good listening skills and show empathy
* Have good verbal and written communication skills
* Feel confident carrying out internet research
* Have good IT skills including use of email and Citizens Advice recording platform (training will be provided)
* Be able to understand information and explain it to others
* Be able to use your written skills to provide accurate, concise and clear notes of your contact with clients
* Feel confident to ask for help when necessary
* Enjoy working within a team and collaboration
* 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



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

For this role we need volunteers who can commit to a minimum of 1 information session per week (approximately 2-3 hours) during business hours (9.00am - 5.00pm Monday - Friday) plus the time to record all contacts and do follow up work, this is likely to be approximately 1 day per week (until March 2024). After March 2024 there may be the opportunity to build on your skills and become a Citizens Advice Adviser or the information project may continue and be developed.

** What are the training requirements?**

There is a requirement to undertake a training program which is spread across 4 weeks. The training is designed to fully equip you to support people who are affected by the Cost of Living Crisis. The training will include:

* An induction with Citizens Advice
* Approximately 28 hours of tutor led training online (we will provide technology so don’t worry if you don’t have a tablet or laptop)
* You may be required to carry out some self study each week

** What checks are carried out?**

Cost of Living volunteers will be required to be screened by the DBS. However, a criminal record will not necessarily be a bar to your being able to take up the volunteering role. We can accept a disclosure certificate gained via another organisation if it is no more than 6 months old.

# **Ready to apply?**

We are so pleased you are considering becoming a volunteer! If you are ready to apply [please fill in our application form](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kvwdmxTI3dFBznMWmjZ9RozdwdQtY46qTr_0J1ZHUjg/copy) and email it back to us. When you click on the link you will be directed to a page that asks you to make a copy of the application form, this is normal, please make a copy. If you have any difficulties with the form or require it in a different format (PDF, Word) please contact us on the email below. Please return your completed application to:

**admin@citizensadvicebristol.org.uk**



**Contact details**

If you are interested in becoming a Cost of Living Information Assistant and would like to discuss any aspect of the role and how we can support you please contact us.

**Email:** naomi.deutsch@citizensadvice bristol.org.uk

**Telephone:** 07467 992806

[Citizens Advice Bristol website](https://www.bristolcab.org.uk/) [Twitter](https://twitter.com/home?lang=en) [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/BristolCAB)