

## Advisers

**Being an adviser is a very varied role. As an adviser you will:**

- Interview clients at drop-in sessions and appointments at Bower Terrace, Maidstone Gateway, over the phone and at outreach sessions
- Give information from the CAB advice database and other sources
- Give advice in explaining the options and consequences the client faces
- Give practical help by writing letters, making phone calls, completing forms,
- Perform calculations for clients such as Quick Benefits Calculations
- Refer clients to other agencies if they are better placed to help
- Keep records of all clients' cases
- Prevent future problems by identifying issues that affect a lot of clients

**You don't need any particular qualifications or experience to train as an adviser. All sorts of people are CAB advisers. You need to:**

- Be good at listening
- Be able to work in a team
- Be able to read and write English, and do basic maths
- Be open-minded and non-judgemental
- Enjoy helping people

### **Support every step of the way**

***Advisers don't need to know it all!*** We provide all trainee advisers with a comprehensive accredited training programme that will give you the skills you need to deliver a high quality service to clients using our up-to-the-minute advice database.

You won't be left alone after you are trained. There will always be a supervisor or a more experienced adviser, who will give you support, advice and guidance. All advisers are insured by CAB in case mistakes are made.

Once you have qualified as a Generalist Adviser, you will have the opportunity to develop further skills and increase the depth and breadth of your knowledge.

## Administrators

Administrators ensure that all our systems run smoothly. Tasks may include:

- Using spread sheets, databases and word processing packages
- Maintaining and developing administrative systems
- Stock control of leaflets and materials and updating information
- Helping to arrange events
- Receiving and sending faxes, mail, email and telephone calls

## Gateway Assessors

The Gateway approach helps clients to be quickly assessed and their issues progressed to the most appropriate next stage. That might be self-help information or an appointment with a specialist adviser. Gateway interviews can be carried out face-to-face or by telephone.

**This is a dynamic and focused role. As a Gateway Assessor you will :**

- Greet clients and explain the gateway assessment process
- Ensure clients know what is happening and how long they might have to wait
- Explain the services available
- Hand out leaflets, lists and self help materials
- Explore the client's problem(s) and situation
- Assess the risk/urgency of the client's issue and their ability to deal with the problem themselves
- Identify together with the supervisor the next step that needs to be taken
- Summarise the content of the interview for the client and explain what happens next
- Ensure clients know they can return if necessary
- Monitor client numbers and waiting times
- Maintain the reception area
- Enter information into computer systems

**Specific qualifications or experience are not required to train to be a Gateway Assessor/Adviser. You need to:**

- Be friendly and approachable
- Be good at listening
- Have basic computing skills
- Be open minded and non-judgemental
- Have an understanding of, and commitment to, confidentiality
- Enjoy helping people

## Why Volunteer for us?

All sorts of people volunteer for many different reasons, but one thing that unites them all is that they find it challenging, rewarding and varied.

**Volunteering provides an opportunity to learn new skills and to develop existing ones:**

- CAB Adviser training is respected and valued throughout the advice sector and can be accredited by the Open College Network.
- Each role will enable you to develop specific expertise. For example, as an administrator, you might improve your IT and organisational skills.
- In any role, you will develop your skills in a number of valuable areas, like communication and dealing with the public, as well as increasing your self-confidence through practical hands-on experience.
- There are opportunities for everyone to develop – you never stop learning!
- It's also a chance to put the skills and experience you have to good use helping others. We welcome people of all ages and backgrounds.

For many people, the best thing about volunteering for the CAB is getting to meet a wide range of people and making new friends. There is a real team spirit at Maidstone CAB, and we provide a supportive environment to make sure that you get the most out of your time with us. We'll do our best to find a role for you that fits in with your interests, and we'll be as flexible as possible in enabling you to volunteer at the times that suit you best.

Above all, it's a chance to make a real difference. By volunteering for Maidstone CAB you'll be playing an active part in improving the lives of many people and influencing the development of national and local policies and services.

And you won't be out of pocket – We will cover the majority of travel costs incurred by volunteering.

**Citizens Advice Maidstone is committed to equal opportunities for everyone. We actively welcome volunteers of all ages from a wide range of different backgrounds. We have national staff and volunteer support groups for black and disabled people, women, lesbians, gay men and bisexuals.**