Housing & Homelessness Caseworker
Job pack

Thanks for your interest in working at Citizens Advice Sedgemoor. This job pack should give you everything you need to know to apply for this role and what it means to work at Citizens Advice.

In this pack you'll find:
- Our values
- 3 things you should know about us
- Overview of Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Sedgemoor
- The role profile and personal specification
- Terms and conditions

Want to chat about this role?
If you want to chat about the role further, you can contact Abi Black by emailing abi.black@citizensadvicesedgemoor.org.uk or calling 01278 459009.

Our values

We're inventive. We're not afraid of trying new things and learn by getting things wrong. We question every idea to make it better and we change when things aren't working.

We're generous. We work together, sharing knowledge and experience to solve problems. We tell it like it is and respect everyone**.**

We're responsible. We do what we say we'll do and keep our promises. We remember that we work for a charity and use our resources effectively.

3 things you should know about us

1. We're local and we're national. We have 6 national offices and offer direct support to people in around 300 independent local Citizens Advice services across England and Wales.

2. We're here for everyone. Our advice helps people solve problems and our advocacy helps fix problems in society. Whatever the problem, we won't turn people away.

3. We're listened to - and we make a difference. Our trusted brand and the quality of our research mean we make a real impact on behalf of the people who rely on us.

How Citizens Advice Sedgemoor works
Citizens Advice Sedgemoor provide free, confidential, and impartial advice on any subject. We are an independent, local charity and a member of the Citizens Advice network. Last year we dealt with over 6600 clients, managed £1.9m of debt on behalf of our clients and generated £2.4m of welfare benefit income.

Our general service operates 5 days a week in Bridgwater and we have weekly outreach sessions across Sedgemoor. Our service is delivered face to face by local volunteers, supported by paid members of staff. We provide money advice and welfare benefit casework.

"The beauty of Citizens Advice is that they never really know what issues they are going to be dealing with! They are great listeners and that's the best start to unravelling what needs to be done and the appropriate advice to be given!"

Client

Our volunteer model means our services are locally delivered by and for members of the community, directly at the point of need.

"I am often very humbled when I can help a client and they leave with a smile on their face. Volunteering for Citizens Advice Sedgemoor provides a stimulating and challenging environment in which to provide help and assistance"

Volunteer

Whilst people seek help with many problems, the most common are benefits, debt, housing, employment, and relationship problems. Our holistic service will explore other issues in addition to the presenting problem.

The clients we help include those most in need – our clients often live on low incomes, over half of our clients have a physical disability or mental health issues.

Some problems are too difficult to solve through advice alone. Our evidence shows there are systemic barriers which stop people's problems being resolved. Our work helps to remove these barriers by improving policy and practice. This can bring change not only for our clients but also for people who may never come to us for help. Our research ad campaigns work provides evidence so that we can better target our support and our resources.

We have around 35 volunteers and 9 paid members of staff supported by an active board of 7 trustees. We have strong working partnerships with local stakeholders including our primary funder, Sedgemoor District Council.

Overview of Citizens Advice

The Citizens Advice service is made up of Citizens Advice - the national charity - and a network of around 300 local Citizens Advice members.

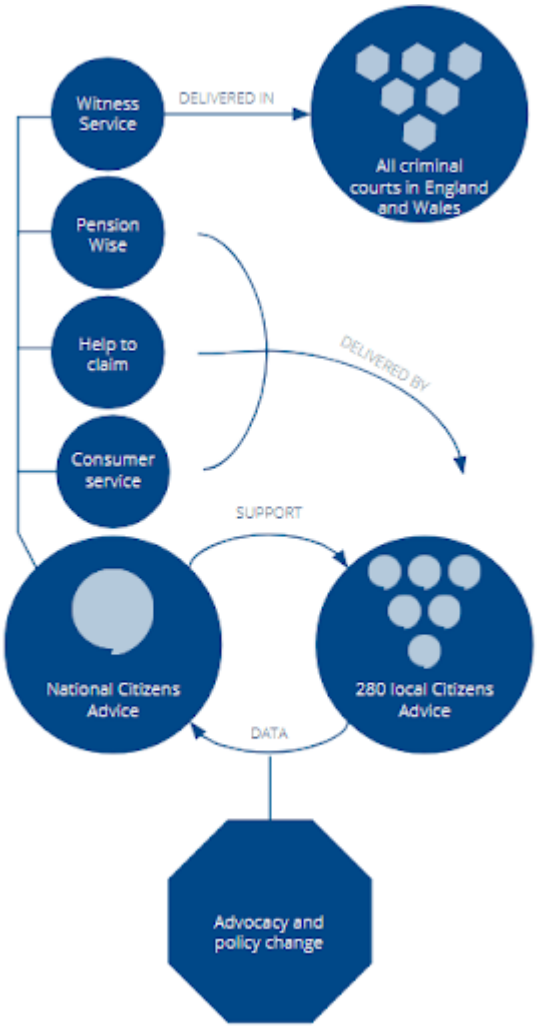
This role sits our network of independent charities, delivering services from

- over 600 local Citizens Advice outlets
- over 1,800 community centres, GPs' surgeries and prisons

They do this with:

- 6,500 local staff
- over 23,000 trained volunteers

Our reach means 99% of people in England and Wales can access a local Citizens Advice within a 30-minute drive of where they live.



The role

Role: Housing & Homelessness Caseworker
Hours: 28 hours per week
Location: Flexible – remote working or Bridgwater
Salary: £22,500 - £24,500 pro rata depending on experience
Contract: Permanent
Application deadline: 12noon 28 August 2020
Interviews : week commencing 7 September 2020

Citizens Advice Sedgemoor are looking for a Housing and Homelessness Caseworker, a new role within the organisation. This is an exciting time to join us, as we have an ambitious agenda to develop our advice services to meet the needs of people in Sedgemoor.

The post-holder will be part of the advice team, working together to deliver multi-channel advice by telephone, digital, virtual and actual face to face to Sedgemoor residents on a range of queries affecting clients who have housing issues, are at risk of homelessness or are homeless.

To apply, please request a job pack and application form from our website www.citizensadvicesedgemoor.org.uk

Role profile

Main Duties and responsibilities

1. **Assessments & client appointments**
   - Provide advice to clients to casework level as per Citizens Advice procedures.
   - Prepare financial statements.
   - Negotiate repayment arrangements with mortgage lenders and landlords.
   - Complete relevant court forms.
   - Represent clients at appropriate court hearings.
   - Lead on the Sedgemoor Social Inclusion Panel.
   - Key point of contact between Citizens Advice Sedgemoor and Sedgemoor District Council to ensure the best outcomes for clients.
   - Identify and develop partnerships with other organisations to best support clients.
   - Ensure tenancy agreements are valid and challenge if they are not.
   - Maintain case records as required by current Citizens Advice procedures.
   - Ensure that all work meets the requirements of our funding bodies and to Citizens Advice quality standards.
   - Provide basic welfare benefits advice to clients, to include assessing eligibility for benefits, better-off calculations and other income maximisation advice.
   - Assist clients to apply for discretionary housing payments.
   - Regularly participate in rough sleeping support initiatives, providing generalist and specialist advice.
   - Assist clients with other problems which are an integral part of their case, referring to other advisers and/or agencies as appropriate.

2. **Research & Campaigns and Monitoring**

- Provide detailed statistics for all enquiries as required by current Citizens Advice procedures.
- Identify and take-up research and campaigns issues, of both local and national importance.

3. **Professional Development**
   - Keep up to date with legislation, procedures relating to money advice issues and undertake appropriate training.

4. **Other duties and responsibilities**
   - Uphold the aims and principles of the Citizens Advice service and its equal opportunities policies.
   - Establish and maintain effective and efficient administration systems for the delivery of the service.
   - Support other Citizens Advice work as required.

Person specification

We are looking for a skilled individual who has:

Essential Criteria

- At least six months' experience of giving generalist advice, and a demonstrable understanding of debt at generalist level.
- An in-depth knowledge of housing law.
- Experience of putting housing law into practice to support clients including at court.
- A clear understanding of homelessness issues.
- The ability to develop and chair the Sedgemoor Social Inclusion Panel including a clear understanding of the importance of partnership working.
- Ability to give welfare benefits advice, including better-off calculations, and to advise on other ways of maximising income.
- Understanding of the issues involved in interviewing clients.
- Ability to plan and prioritise own work, meet targets and deadlines.
- Ability to maintain effective administrative systems for the collection of statistics and to ensure competent case recording.
- Understanding of the issues affecting society and their implications for clients and service provision, and the ability to take effective action on these issues.
- Ability to identify cases where referral to another adviser of other agency is necessary, and the ability to make an effective referral.
- Flexible approach and willingness to work as part of a team of paid and voluntary workers.
- Ability to research, analyse and interpret information.
- Effective written and oral communication skills.
- Ability to work on own initiative and be highly motivated.
- Good IT skills to including the ability to deliver a service remotely and/or virtually.
- A flexible attitude to home-based working.

Terms and conditions

Ordinarily, the main place of work for this role would Bridgwater with some the potential for some travel across Somerset. We are currently delivering our service flexibly with a combination of office and home working.

Reasonable expenses will be reimbursed for costs incurred.

This is a permanent contract after a probationary period of 6 months. The full-time working week is 37.5 hours and normal hours are from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

The annual leave year runs from 01 January to 31 December and full-time employees are entitled to 25 days paid annual leave plus statutory holidays.

There is an auto enrolment pension scheme with an employer contribution of 7.5%