

Dear Applicant,

Thank you so much for your interest in volunteering at Citizens Advice Brighton & Hove! As a charity we really rely on volunteers to help people in the city, and at any time we're likely to have only about a dozen paid staff (mostly part time) and around 50 volunteers, so the generosity you show with your time is essential to us helping almost 10,000 people a year from around the city.

A lot of people are surprised by the range of topics we help people with and how busy and demanding it can be volunteering here.

Common topics probably won't surprise you, benefits, debt, housing, and employment top our lists every year, but beyond that topics can get pretty diverse and you'll really be surprised by some of the questions you'll be asked!

You might wonder how anyone could be prepared for that? The answer is you'll be joining a team of staff and volunteers who have been doing this for a long time, and drawing on their experience is an essential part of volunteering here. We provide a lot of training, and you'll work through theory before you practise. You'll also get extra support until you're ready to advise clients on your own. You'll be surprised how much you learn, and how quickly, but there's always a team behind you to help with the things you don't know yet.

All of this means that volunteering for Citizens Advice is a commitment, and one that we respect by committing to support and train you. We ask that you commit to a year of volunteering for 2 sessions a week. Whether your goal is simply to help people or to get experience for moving into a job, we're committed to making sure you're given what you need to give your best and leave having made a real difference every day.



You've already taken the first step in becoming part of our team, and we want to make sure you have the best chance of showing your skills and being selected for the next steps so we want to offer some tips for the application process.

## Application Tips

- Please complete the application form on a computer – this will give you more space to put your points across, as well as demonstrating your IT skills. Please also make sure to send the application in a Word document instead of a PDF, as this will help us maintain your anonymity during the first stages of recruitment.
- Look carefully at the personal skills and qualities required for your role; this is on the role profile / description.
- When answering the questions, try to show how you meet the skills and qualities required and give examples. For instance, if the question says:

*“Describe any skills you have that would be useful for the role you wish to do”*  
and one of the personal skills listed is

*“the ability to communicate clearly both orally and in writing”,*

you should include examples of when you have done this, such as:

*“In my role as XXXXX, I regularly had to communicate with both internal and external contacts via email, face to face meetings and telephone.”*

*“I also gave presentations and regular updates to the rest of the team. ”*

This not only shows you can communicate orally and in writing but also have the ability to work as part of a team.

- We can only mark an application on what you write as answers to the questions, so don't assume by listing some interesting experience we know what's involved – make sure you talk about it in the answers to the questions.

It's a good idea to take a little extra time to make your application stand out.

Thank you again for taking the time to apply, we genuinely appreciate every application and are very grateful for your support. Good luck, and we hope we'll be welcoming you to the team soon.

Sincerely,

Jo Carden, CEO

Citizens Advice Brighton & Hove