



# **Citizens Advice Birmingham**

## **Recruitment Pack**

**Role: Universal Support Worker**  
**(Universal Support-Help to Claim team)**  
**Fixed contract until 31/3/2020**

**Closing Date: 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019 12.00 noon**

**Interview Date: To be arranged**

# **Contents:**

**Introduction**

**Our Values**

**Terms and Conditions**

**How to Apply**

**A Guide to Completing the Application Form**

**How the Citizens Advice service works**

**Citizens Advice Universal Support – Help to Claim Service**

**Job Description**

**Person Specification**

# Introduction

Thank you for your interest in applying for a post with Citizens Advice Birmingham. We do appreciate the time and effort it takes to compile a good application and thank you in advance for that. But, we thought it might be useful to provide some general background on the work of Citizens Advice Birmingham. You can of course find out more from our website.

Citizens Advice Birmingham is a community charity and has provided an unbroken advice service in the city since 1939. The vast majority of that advice being delivered by volunteers. Whilst we are justly proud of our history, Birmingham, like every major city is rapidly changing. To meet the challenges we have to be responsive and innovative in the way in which we deliver our service. This in turn, means employees have to be open to working in new ways, enthusiastic about our service and flexible in their approach.

The city of Birmingham is home to over 1.1 million people. Birmingham is regarded as a young city with 45.7% of the population estimated to be under 30 years compared to estimates of 39.4% for England as a whole. The older population is lower than nationally with 13.1% of residents over 65 years, compared to 17.6% nationally. Birmingham has a very diverse population with 42.07% of residents classified as non-white; the proportion of the population classified as white is 57.93%, 25.43% of the population is classified as Asian or British Asian and 8.98% of the population is Black or Black British.

Birmingham is a city of inequalities and challenges, for example the life expectancy between people living in the most affluent areas and the most deprived is 7.4 years less for men and 4.9 years less for women. A total of 37% of children live in poverty in the city - that is one in three children. Infant mortality is 7.2 per 1,000 live births compared to the national average of 4 per 1,000. According to Birmingham City Council 144,000 children (10 -15 year olds) live in the bottom decile households. It is anticipated that the number of children aged 5 – 14 in the city will grow by 13% over the twenty years 2015-2035. The number of family homelessness is 6.2 per 1,000 in 2016. Birmingham is ranked first nationally for the total number of fuel poor households. Many of the major industries of the past have left Birmingham and people often now have to resort to low paid, low skilled insecure/zero hour jobs. Certain sections of the community are fairly transient which again generates a different set of needs around advice.

Working at Citizens Advice Birmingham will bring you into contact with all types of people, with all of their differing experiences. Those who work, either as paid employees or volunteers are representative of the community, diverse but sharing the same Citizens Advice values and ethos. This is the richness of our service – a service that is built entirely out of ordinary people helping ordinary people, every day, every week, every year - and if successful you would be warmly welcomed within it.

Janice Nichols

Chief Executive Citizens Advice Birmingham

# Our Values

As an organisation we are very clear about what is expected of us at work and what others can expect from us in terms of how the service is delivered.

## **Respectful**

We aim to treat everyone with whom we come into contact with, with respect and to be treated respectfully in return.

## **Professional**

We are committed to providing a professional advice service, to be individually and collectively responsible for the quality of that service and wherever possible, to work to improve it.

## **Understanding**

We aim to treat everyone in a non-judgmental way, to seek to understand other people's perspective and not make assumptions about people without listening to them and their experiences. We work with clients in ways which empower them by developing appropriate solutions for their needs, and suggesting a range of options that they might consider – the decision about what is best for them is their choice.

## **Thoughtful**

We aim to always think about what we do, not adhere to process simply for its own sake. To commit to thinking about and embracing new ways of service delivery. We want to always consider the impact of what we do

## **Flexible**

We all understand that the need to innovate and be responsive to change is critical to our success. We understand and recognise that change is sometimes challenging and it can be personally difficult. However as a charity we are always striving to achieve a great deal with a lot less than we would like, we can only do that if people are prepared to be personally responsible and as flexible as they can be.

# Terms and Conditions

## 1. **Salary**      **£ 21,016.08 per annum (pro-rata for part-time hours)**

Appointment will be at this salary, we do not operate a system of salary scales.

On occasion we offer potential employees trainee roles if we feel that they have not demonstrated the required level of competence in a key skills area.

## 2. **Hours of Work 36.5 hours per week**

Working hours are between 8am and 6 pm, Monday to Friday, individual employees work patterns vary to meet the needs of the job and the team.

## 3. **Annual leave**

Annual leave is 25 days plus 8 bank holidays pro rata per annum from 1st January to 31st December. This rises to 30 days pro rata over the next 5 years. After passing the probation period, employees can ask to buy up to 5 days additional leave (pro rata for part time employees).

## 4. **Pension Scheme**

Citizens Advice Birmingham provides a pension scheme, Citizens Advice Birmingham contributes 3% to a pension plan, whilst employees contribute 4%. Employees are auto enrolled onto the group scheme, further details will be made available on or after appointment. You do have the right to opt out of this scheme.

## 5. **Learning and Development**

Employees are encouraged to develop and be active participants in identifying their development needs and sourcing training and development opportunities

## 6. **Salary Sacrifice Schemes**

Citizens Advice offers childcare vouchers and operates a system whereby you can 'buy' additional leave allowance of up to 5 days per annum (pro rata for part time employees).

## 7. **BPSS Check**

A BPSS check is a requirement for this role. This will be paid for by Citizens Advice Birmingham.

We do not accept previous checks.

## **8. Equality and Diversity**

Citizens Advice Birmingham recognises the positive value of diversity, promotes equality and challenges unfair discrimination. We recognise people with different backgrounds, skills, attitudes and experiences bring fresh ideas and perceptions, and we wish to encourage and harness these differences to make our services more relevant and approachable. Citizens Advice Birmingham will not discriminate or tolerate discriminatory behaviour on the grounds of race, colour, sex, transgender, disability, nationality, national or ethnic origin, religion or belief, marital/partnership or family status, sexual orientation, age, social class, educational background, employment status, working pattern, trade union membership or any other irrelevant factor in any aspect of employment.

Our values include a commitment to equality and fairness, and to valuing each other. All our employees are expected to have read and understood our Equality and Diversity Policy and to ensure they behave in accordance with its principles. Breaches of the policy may lead to disciplinary action.

## **9. Dignity at Work**

Citizens Advice Birmingham is committed to providing a culture in which all employees value each other and are able to work together to their full potential in an inclusive environment free from harassment, bullying and other unacceptable forms of behaviour. Unacceptable behaviour in the workplace will be actively dealt with, all complaints will be taken seriously, confidentiality will be respected and victimisation of those that raise complaints will not be tolerated.

Our values include commitments to work together and value each other - all our employees are expected to have read and understood our Dignity at Work Policy and to ensure they behave in accordance with its principles. All employees are responsible for helping to create and maintain a positive and inclusive working environment free from bullying and harassment. All managers have a particular responsibility for ensuring a supportive and inclusive working environment in which dignity at work is actively promoted.

## **10. Probationary Period**

New appointments are subject to a six months probationary period. Performance is reviewed after three months and again after six months. At the end of the probationary period the outcome of the assessment may be confirmation of post; notice of dismissal; or at Citizens Advice Birmingham's discretion, an extension of the probationary period by a further three months. During this period you will not be entitled to occupational sick pay.

# How to apply

**The closing date is 1<sup>st</sup> May 2019 12.00 noon**

**The interviews will be held on a date to be arranged**

Application is by the form available for download from [www.bcabs.org.uk](http://www.bcabs.org.uk) with the job role details.

The completed application form should be sent to [hr@bcabs.org.uk](mailto:hr@bcabs.org.uk) before the closing date and time.

Most of our roles require people to pay attention to detail and to submit forms in the required format and on time. Therefore we see compliance with this element of the process as very important.

# A Guide to Completing the Application Form

## Instructions on how to complete the Supporting information page: Information, experience, knowledge, skills and abilities section of the application form

This is a **key section** of the application form which allows you to provide evidence of your experience, knowledge, skills and abilities that are relevant to the role as described in the role profile. Selection is based on an assessment of the evidence you provide against the requirements of the role as set out in the person specification. It is important that you tailor your response to clearly demonstrate how you meet each requirement. No assumptions will be made about your achievements and abilities.

It is extremely useful if you provide one example for each requirement in the person specification (found in the job pack). You should choose examples of past experience that clearly demonstrate what we are looking for, and be precise about what you did, how you did it and the outcome or result of your actions. It is important to be concise so please try to limit your response to each criterion to a maximum of 200 words.

A useful guide might be **S.T.A.R.**:

- **Specific** – give a specific example
- **Task** – briefly describe the task/objective/problem
- **Action** – tell us what you did
- **Results** – describe what results were achieved

Please provide recent work examples wherever possible. However, do remember that relevant examples from other aspects of your life, for example: voluntary or unpaid work, school or college work, family or home responsibilities, can also be given.

## Entitlement to work in the UK

A job offer will be subject to confirmation that you are permitted to work in the UK in accordance with the provisions of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996. You will be asked to provide evidence of your entitlement to work in the UK if you are successful and an offer of employment is made.

Please note that Citizens Advice does not hold a sponsor licence and, therefore, cannot issue certificates of sponsorship under the points-based system.



## **Diversity monitoring**

Citizens Advice Birmingham values diversity and promotes equality. We encourage and welcome applications from suitably skilled candidates from all backgrounds. Monitoring recruitment and selection procedures is one way of helping us to ensure that there is no unfair discrimination in the way that we recruit people. To do this we need to know about the diversity profile of people who apply for posts at Citizens Advice. This information is given in confidence for monitoring purposes only and is not seen by anyone responsible for making recruitment decisions. However, you may prefer not to answer any of the questions we ask.

## **Shortlisting outcomes**

Shortlisted applicants will be invited for an interview. Some positions may require additional assessments (practical task/test or an assessment centre approach). If this is the case, you will have received details either with the application pack or further details will be provided if you are shortlisted.

We endeavour to let all candidates know the outcome of their application, but if you have not been contacted by the date of the interview please assume on this occasion you have been unsuccessful. That said, if you wish to know how your application is progressing, please email us at [hr@bcabs.org.uk](mailto:hr@bcabs.org.uk).

## **References**

All job offers are subject to the receipt of two references that are satisfactory to us: one of these should be your present or most recent employer, the other could be someone who knows you in a work related, voluntary or academic capacity. Both referees should be able to comment on your suitability for the post applied for.

# How the Citizens Advice service works

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

The national charity includes:

- 800 national staff working in one of 6 offices (or as homeworkers), or as part of the Witness Service from over 240 courts across England and Wales
- 3,000 Witness Service volunteers

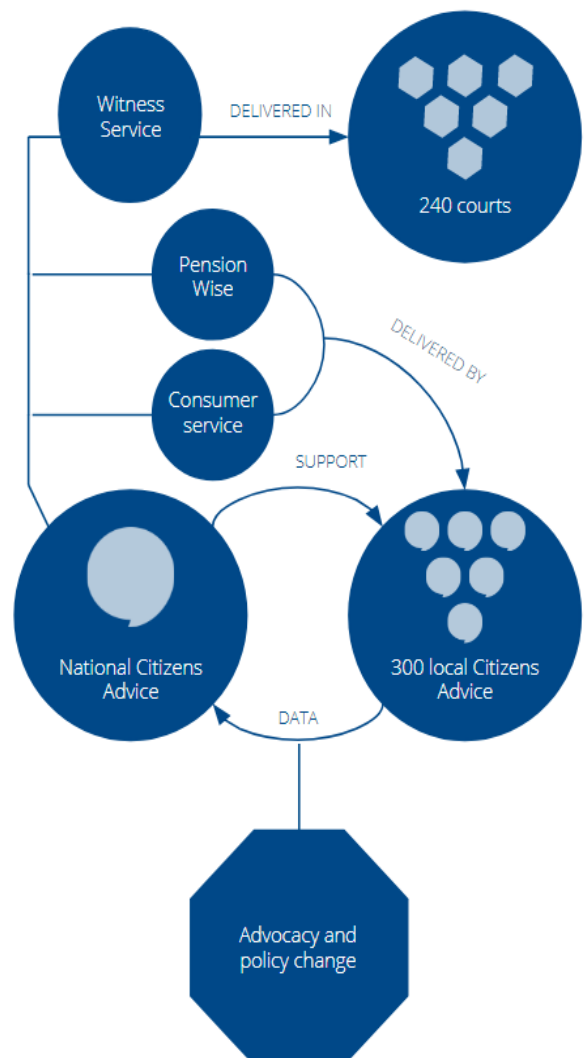
The local network members are all independent charities, delivering services from:

- 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.



# Citizens Advice Universal Support – Help to Claim Service

## Background

Universal Credit (UC) is the fastest growing advice issue for the Citizens Advice service and local Citizens Advice (LCA) offices across the country. Since the rollout began we've helped nearly 150,000 people across England and Wales move to the new system. Over the past few years we've worked together as a service to urge government to fix the problems people are having with UC. We've achieved some important changes for our clients so far:

- making the phone line free
- reducing the time people are waiting for their first payment
- securing extra funding for Universal Credit in this year's budget.

Evidence from Citizens Advice and other organisations shows that people, especially the most vulnerable, need nationwide, consistent access to the best possible support to make their Universal Credit claim and get the right payments.

In its current configuration, evidence and public feedback shows low claimant awareness and take-up of Universal Support (US) nationally. Given the challenges ahead for UC, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions announced on 1 October that she has asked Citizens Advice and Citizens Advice Scotland to deliver an end-to-end help to claim service delivering nationally consistent and high quality local support for UC claimants. This new service, Universal Support – Help to Claim, will be delivered by LCA offices like Citizens Advice Birmingham.

The new US will be available throughout England, Wales and Scotland from April 2019 – in person, over the phone and online (for some areas the new service will begin earlier). The new improved US from April 2019 will help people through the claim process – offering tailored support to help them to use the flexibilities available in UC, helping them to get their first payment on time and making sure

they are ready to manage it when it arrives. Citizens Advice is working with every LCA (each of which is a locally supported registered charity) to deliver this commitment.

Citizens Advice will continue to work closely with jobcentres, local authorities and other partners across the country to build on best practice and deliver joined-up services in a way that makes sense for people in communities and achieves the right results.

### **How the service will work**

There will be 2 main parts to the service:

**Part 1** offers people support to submit their initial claim. Under the current system we know that it's taking many clients up to a week to prepare and submit their claim – causing further delays to payments. This part of the new service is designed to reduce that wait time.

**Part 2** offers people support to complete their full claim and be ready to receive their first payment. This part of the service will help people to submit all the evidence needed to receive their payment and be ready to manage it when it arrives.

The service will be available face-to-face, online and over the phone. We'll assess each client's circumstances and level of need and adapt our support accordingly to make sure people get the support they need in the way they want to receive it.

### **Preserving our impartiality**

In accepting the funding for the US service from the government, Citizens Advice has been clear that it won't in any way affect our impartiality. We'll continue to speak up on UC as we do on all the issues that matter most to our clients. In particular, we want to ensure that the process of moving people from legacy benefits to UC through managed migration works for our clients, including the most vulnerable. Delivering the US service will give us even greater insight into how UC is working and increase the opportunities to raise our evidence with the government.

## **JOB DESCRIPTION**

### **Universal Support Worker (Universal Support-Help to Claim team)**

#### **Context of role**

We are looking for people to join our new Universal Support Help to Claim team.

The team will provide an effective and efficient support service for first time Universal Credit claimants. The service includes the provision of advice, information and digital support via face-to-face, telephone and digital channels, aimed at helping claimants through to the first payment of Universal Credit.

#### **Role Purpose**

To contribute towards the effective delivery of the Universal Support (Help to Claim) service by providing telephone, webchat and face-to-face support to Universal Credit claimants.

#### **Main Responsibilities**

##### **Service delivery**

1. Contribute to positive working relationships with a range of agencies, including the DWP
2. Engage with clients to assess individual support needs to determine the most appropriate level of service
3. Actively promote the use of self-help information or assisted access to digital information as appropriate
4. Support and assist clients to:
  - access appropriate websites and identify relevant forms and self-help information
  - access, download and print off relevant information
  - complete online claim forms
  - develop the skills and confidence to access digital services
5. Where assisted digital access will not meet the client's needs, assist them to start their Universal Credit claim. This may include:
  - setting up a personal email account
  - setting up a new bank account
  - accessing online gateway and setting up a Universal Credit account
  - assisting the client to complete the tasks required
6. Where a valid claim has been accepted, supporting the client until such time as they receive their first payment. This may include:

- helping the client verify their identity
- providing and uploading any additional information or evidence that the DWP may require
- setting up an account
- making or reviewing online journal entries
- notifying any change of circumstances
- preparing for DWP work coach appointments
- providing basic budgeting support including accessing emergency financial support e.g. foodbank vouchers

## **Research and campaigns**

1. Assist with research and campaigns work by providing information about clients' experiences related to the project
2. Collect evidence to highlight any problem areas
3. Provide case studies to demonstrate the impact of the project
4. Assist with compiling reports for the Research & Campaigns team on the impact of Universal Credit

## **Professional development**

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

## **Administration and monitoring**

1. Maintain case records for the purpose of continuity, information retrieval, statistical monitoring and report preparation
2. Ensure that all work conforms with the systems and procedures in place

## **Other duties and responsibilities**

1. Complete the required training to comply with quality assurance processes.

2. Attend external events and deliver presentations as required.
3. Carry out any other tasks that may be within the scope of the post to ensure the effective delivery and development of the service.
4. Demonstrate commitment to the aims and policies of the Citizens Advice service.
5. Abide by health and safety guidelines and share responsibility for own safety and that of colleagues.
6. carry out any other relevant administrative and support duties required to ensure effective delivery of the Universal Support Help to Claim service

**NOTE:** A BPSS check is a requirement for this role.

## **PERSON SPECIFICATION**

- Knowledge and experience of welfare benefits advice (desirable)
- Proficient in IT and experience of providing digital support
- Effective oral and written communication skills
- Understanding of the issues involved in interviewing clients
- Numerate to the level required in the tasks
- Ability to prioritise work and meet deadlines
- Ability and willingness to work as part of a team
- Ability to monitor and maintain own standards
- Demonstrate understanding of social trends and their implications for clients and service provision
- Awareness that our clients are at the heart of everything that we do
- A commitment to continuing professional development of self and others
- Ability to commit to and work within the values, aims, principles and policies of the Citizens Advice service in which equality and diversity is embedded throughout
- Ability to travel throughout the area
- Willingness to share hours of work with colleagues covering Monday – Friday 8am-6pm