

Job Title: Assessor (Cost of Living Hub)
Salary: £20,771.13 - £23,079.04 depending on experience + 8.5% pension contribution after successful completion of probation period
Hours: 35 hours per week but open to part-time and flexible working
Responsible to: Service Manager
Responsible for: Not applicable
Location: Our office in Battersea Library or Roehampton, with home working possible following induction and initial training

About us

We're a thriving advice organisation that is part of the national Citizens Advice network. We provide information, advice and casework support to around 10,000 people a year. Our services are delivered by a team of around 40 paid staff and 60 volunteers and in our last annual survey 98% of our team recommended us as a good place to work. We have a typical annual turnover of £1.6m and in addition to our core advice service, funded by Wandsworth Council, we have a range of projects funded by trusts, foundations, and our local Integrated Care System.

While we're proud of our services and the number of residents we support we recognise that we can't meet local demand for advice. Because of this we place equal value on preventative work, local advocacy, collaboration, capacity building and partnership development.

About the project

In response to the cost of living crisis, Wandsworth Council are funding us to deliver an advice project that supports residents with financial issues. This is a 12-month project with the possibility of funding being extended.

You will work with a cost of living team made up of two assessors, two advisers and a caseworker/supervisor. This team will manage a dedicated helpline but will also work alongside our existing projects and services, which are already seeing a large number of clients affected by cost of living issues. The project will offer holistic advice, responding to immediate need and hardship as well as working to find long-term solutions. The team will offer advice about a range of issues, including benefits, debt, budgeting and energy efficiency schemes, and there will be an opportunity for team members to shape the service offered. This project

will also involve working in partnership with council officers, co-locating, offering training about basic advice issues and taking referrals directly from them.

About the role

As one of the team's assessors you'll answer calls to the helpline, speak to clients face-to-face at our advice centres and outreach locations. You will be responsible for quickly triaging client issues, identifying and addressing emergencies, providing initial information and then signposting and referring on for in-depth support.

This is a great opportunity for anyone who wants to develop their advice knowledge and potentially progress into an advice role. Familiarity with Citizens Advice and advice services generally may help with this role but we're not necessarily looking for someone with an advice background. It's more important that you share our values and have the capability to grow into the role. We're happy to help you develop, learn and fill out any areas where you don't have all the experience or expertise.

Main duties and responsibilities

Assessments and referral management

- Speak to clients on the project helpline, by phone and at face-to-face drop-in sessions.
- Manage referrals coming into the project through other channels.
- Assess client's situation using sensitive listening and questioning skills.
- Identify key information about the client's problem including time limits, key dates and need for urgent advice or action (using publicly available information sources, scripts and any other diagnostic tools as necessary).
- Assess and agree the appropriate level of service, taking into consideration the client's ability to take the next step themselves, the complexity of the problem and our resources.
- Refer clients appropriately (both internally and externally), including making arrangements and informing clients of what to expect.
- Identify if there is any question of discrimination and be aware of our approach for dealing with actual and potential discrimination issues.
- Maintain case records for the purpose of continuity of service, information retrieval, statistical monitoring and preparing reports.

Project development and partnership management

- Support the project manager to mobilise the project.
- Contribute to team meetings and engage with discussions about developing, promoting and improving the project over time.
- Contribute to developing and maintaining great relationships with key partners such as council officers.

Administration

- Use IT for statistical recording of information relating to social policy and funding requirements, record keeping and document production.
- Ensure IT information assurance training is completed on an annual basis.
- Ensure that all work conforms to agreed systems and procedures.
- Provide statistical information as requested for reporting purposes on the number of clients and nature of cases.

Learning and development

- Keep up to date with legislation, policies and procedures and undertake appropriate training for gateway assessment.
- Identify own training needs and pursue appropriate professional development with the support of line manager.

Other duties and responsibilities

- Keep up to date with Citizens Advice aims, policies and procedures and ensure these are followed.
- Contribute to us being a positive working environment in which equality and diversity are well-managed, dignity at work is upheld and staff and volunteers can do their best.
- Assist with our research and campaigns work by identifying policy issues and raising these with the R&C team.
- Abide by our health and safety policy and share responsibility for own safety and that of colleagues.
- Carry out any other tasks that may be within the scope of the post to ensure the effective delivery and development of the service.

Person specification

Essential		Measured in
1.	Understanding of and commitment to the aims of the Citizens Advice service .	Application Interview
2.	Understanding of the issues that people approach us about and what a good quality service looks and feels like for clients.	Application Interview
3.	Ability to use listening and questioning skills to gather key facts and information in a structured way whilst conducting phone and/or in-person interviews.	Application Interview Interview task
4.	Ability to prioritise own work in order to meet deadlines and targets.	Application Interview
5.	Commitment to working flexibly and supportively as part of a team.	Application
6.	Strong interpersonal and communication skills (verbal and written).	Application Interview
7.	Understanding of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, including the impact of discrimination and disadvantage on our clients, as well as a commitment to investing in increasing your own awareness of EDI issues so you can contribute to making our organisation as equitable and inclusive as possible.	Application Interview
8.	Ability to receive feedback and a commitment to reflective performance.	Application Interview
Desirable		Measured in
9.	Knowledge and understanding of the Citizens Advice assessment and advice process and key advice issues.	Application
10.	A Citizens Advice assessor certificate or experience working as an assessor within our network	Application
11.	Knowledge of Wandsworth, including local services, communities and geography.	Application

12.	Experience of using advice services.	Application
The postholder will need a satisfactory and recent basic DBS.		