

Recruitment Pack

Macmillan Specialist Benefits Adviser

Date: January 2025



Introduction from Coventry Citizens Advice

Thank you for taking the time to consider applying for a job at Coventry Citizens Advice. We are one of the largest Citizens Advice organisations in the country, helping more than 12,000 people per year with over 50,000 issues. We identify and help secure nearly £13 million in financial gains which clients either did not know about or hadn't accessed before.

We want to make society fairer, and we do that with each client, helping people find a way forward for their individual problems, and by influencing how the policies of the local authority, government, and the private sector impact on our clients' lives.

The way we deliver services is changing and we are providing advice more and more in the community and our workforce, both volunteer and staff, reflects that community.

You will know that we are in challenging financial times and incomes are being squeezed by rising inflation, energy costs, and increasing cost of housing. Many people are struggling to pay back debts and are dealing with employment, family, consumer, housing, and other issues.

Working for Coventry Citizens Advice is extremely rewarding due to the positive impact and high-quality service we provide for residents. Our clients are fundamental in what we do, and our values are key to how we work across the charity. It is important to us that volunteers and staff share our values, which can be found below.

Thank you for your interest in applying for a role within Coventry Citizens Advice and good luck in your application.

Our Values:

Our core values as an organisation are: Respect, Inclusion, Accountability, Professionalism. We look to embed them in every aspect of the work we do, how we behave and how we support each other. Together we ensure that our values are brought into behaviours that we demonstrate every day so that we can offer the best possible service to our clients. We have a Behaviour Framework for all staff and volunteers, and everyone at all levels of the organisation strives to work in this way.

We are professional because we demonstrate:

Respect and Inclusivity

- Treat all colleagues, clients, and stakeholders with respect, regardless of race, gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status.
- Listen actively and empathetically to clients and colleagues, valuing their perspectives.
- Avoid any language or behaviour that could be perceived as discriminatory, harassing, or bullying.

Communication

- Communicate clearly and effectively, ensuring that language is appropriate for the audience.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding client information and sensitive internal matters.
- Use non-judgmental, person-centred language that is supportive and respectful of individual circumstances.

Professional Integrity

- Ensure that all advice provided is accurate, impartial, and in line with the standards set by Coventry Citizens Advice.
- Seek to continuously improve knowledge and skills through professional development and training.
- Be transparent in decision-making processes and acknowledge mistakes or misunderstandings openly.

Collaboration and Teamwork

- Foster a culture of collaboration where staff, volunteers, and partners work together for the benefit of clients.

- Share knowledge and information openly with colleagues to enhance the quality of advice and support offered.
- Support and mentor less experienced staff and volunteers, contributing to a positive and supportive work environment.

Person-centred Approach

- Prioritize the needs of clients, ensuring that advice is tailored to their individual circumstances and delivered in a respectful manner.
- Engage clients in decision-making about their cases, ensuring they are empowered to take informed steps.
- Avoid any behaviour that could exploit or manipulate vulnerable clients.

About Coventry Citizens Advice

Coventry Citizens Advice is a progressive organisation that has been able to continually innovate and develop new services. Coventry Citizens Advice has been able to demonstrate excellence in a number of areas and been commended for its volunteer training, information service and partnership working. We are multi, local and national award winners in a wide range of areas including Research & Campaigning, Service Development and Money Advice.

Coventry Citizens Advice has a Trustee Board, all of whom bring professional skills and knowledge of the city and are responsible for setting the strategy and budget for the service. Day to day responsibility for the running of the organisation sits with the Chief Executive who oversees the day-to-day running of local Citizens Advice office services.

We have an increasing number of projects all of which work collaboratively to deliver the best outcomes for the residents we work with.

Other benefits

We also offer a range of additional benefits:

- Flexible working arrangements
- Fees paid for membership of relevant professional bodies
- Regular professional development
- Health & Wellbeing services provided through Employee Assistance Programme 'Health Assured'
- Specialised professional support for a range of issues through 'Peppy'
- Cycle to Work-Scheme

- Free eye tests and contribution towards lenses/ spectacles for Computer users if appropriate
- Standing desks and walking meetings
- Discounts on leisure facilities and a range of discounted offers

Conditions regarding offers of employment

If you are successful and are offered employment, we would offer the post conditionally in the first instance, whilst we follow up on your references, DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check (if appropriate), health clearance and your right to work in the UK as detailed below:

Security Clearance

Any offer of employment will be subject to satisfactory completion of a security and pre-employment checks which for this role include DBS checks with Disclosure and Barring Service. The level of DBS check required for this post is: **Enhanced**. Further information about the security checking procedure is available on request.

Health Clearance

Any offer of employment will be subject to satisfactory completion of a Health Questionnaire and, should you disclose any health issues that might affect your ability to work, then any offer of employment will be subject to a satisfactory assessment by Occupational Health. Occupational Health will identify whether there are any reasonable adjustments which can be made to support you at work.

Right to work in the UK

Under United Kingdom immigration rules, it is a criminal offence to employ a person who is subject to immigration control and who has not been granted leave to enter or remain in the UK or does not have permission to remain in the UK.

Coventry Citizens Advice therefore has a legal obligation to carry out document checks to ensure that you have a legal right to work in the UK. It is also a requirement that we retain copies of the relevant documents.

To avoid potential unlawful discrimination claims we will carry out appropriate checks on all candidates.

Disability

Coventry Citizens Advice is committed to the employment and career development of disabled people. As a Disability Confident employer, we guarantee an interview to any candidate with a disability whose application meets all the essential criteria for the post.

If you would like to apply for the Guaranteed Interview Scheme, please ensure that you tick the box you will find on the application form for the scheme.

If you consider that you have a disability under the Equality Act 2020 and require any reasonable adjustments to be made in the recruitment process or at work subsequently if appointed, please make sure you tell us separately. We follow the social model of disability which believes that it is the barriers created by society which disable people. We will use reasonable adjustments wherever possible to remove those barriers.

Equality and Diversity

We recognise the benefits of having a diverse workforce and will take steps to ensure this. Further information on this is available on request.

How to Apply

Application Form

Please complete the application form as we do not accept CVs.

Please note that when shortlisting we base our scoring and decision making on the answers you provide in Section 2 of the application form.

This section 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.

Please provide one example for each requirement in the person specification. 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.

Please note that there is a word limit of 200 words per criterion.

A useful guide is the S.T.A.R. method:

- **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.

Instructions

The closing date for applications is **14 February 2025, 9am.**

Interviews to be held **week commencing 17 February 2025**
(in the event that you are shortlisted, you will need to be available in this week).

We really want to find the right person for this role, so recruitment will be ongoing until we find the best candidate.

Where we ask you to give a presentation or complete a technical test on the day, we will provide you with further details and indicate the time you have available, as well as making sure you have the resources available to complete the task.

Please email your application to: recruitment@coventrycab.org.uk.

If you are unable to make an electronic application, you may submit your application on paper and post to:

Recruitment, Coventry Citizens Advice, 1-7 Station Street East, Foleshill, Coventry CV6 5FL.

Please ensure your application arrives before the deadline.

Selection Process

After the closing date we will consider all applications carefully and invite those candidates who appear, from the information available, to be the best-suited for the post to a an interview session.

It is important therefore that your application gives a full but concise description of the nature, extent and level of the responsibilities you have held.

If selected, details of the interview process will be sent to you by email or letter.

Travel Expenses

We do not pay for interview expenses; however, we may reimburse candidates on means-tested benefits for reasonable travel expenses to attend an interview if prior authorisation has been obtained.

Data Protection and how we will use your information

We will use your application only to inform the selection process – this is our ‘legitimate interest’ under data protection law. Your application will be kept on record for 12 months after which we will destroy it. If you are successful, it will form the basis of your personnel record with us and we will store it in a digital file. We will hold any data about you in completely secure conditions with restricted access.

Diversity Monitoring

We will include data that you provide on the diversity monitoring form in a general database for statistical monitoring purposes only enabling us to monitor our effectiveness of our policy on equal opportunities and employment. Individuals will not be identified by name.

We shall consider that by submitting the enclosed forms you are giving your consent to the processing of your data in the ways described above.

Job Description & Person Specification

Coventry Citizens Advice

Macmillan Specialist Benefits Adviser

Salary:	£28,000 – £31,737 per annum
Contract:	Permanent
Hours:	14.5 hrs per week
Responsible to:	Macmillan Project Manager and Macmillan Team Leader
Based at:	Coventry Citizens Advice Head Office Hybrid working subject to negotiation

The Service

The service is provided for clients across Coventry and Warwickshire mainly by telephone and home-based, if preferred it can be delivered from one of our premises; hybrid working is encouraged, (Face-to-face advice has previously been provided in different settings and there may be a requirement at some time for this to resume).

Purpose of the Job

To provide specialist advice and casework up to representational level regarding state welfare benefits, Tax Credits, Local Authority entitlements, and charitable grants to mitigate the financial impact of a cancer diagnosis.

Key Responsibilities

1. For clients affected by cancer:

- Deliver the service by a range of methods, incl. telephone/digital channels with the possibility of its augmentation by F2F appointments, outreach work and home visits.
- Advise and assist identifying potential financial gains, performing calculations, completing forms, negotiating with third parties, drafting or writing letters.
- Provide a full casework service in welfare benefits, e.g., optimization of Disability Benefits, Elements and Additions.
- Assist clients with other related problems including employment, housing and debt related issues where they are an integral part of the case, referring or signposting to internal or external sources of advice, as appropriate.

- With training and support, prepare and present cases to statutory bodies, tribunals and courts, referring to specialist representation, if required. (This is an area we aspire to develop further.)
- Ensure appropriate referrals to MacMillan Support Services.
- Ensure that all advice and casework conform to Citizens Advice membership and MacMillan requirements, and the Advice Quality Standard.
- Maintain and utilize detailed case records using the accepted case management system.
- Ensure the delivery of individual service targets and support the delivery of the overall targets for the CCA MacMillan Project.
- Contribute to the mutual support provided by the MacMillan Benefits Specialists to one another.

2. Service Development

- Attend and participate in regular team meetings to enhance the performance of the MacMillan Project and CCA generally.
- Participate in the MacMillan Peer Review, (Monthly IFR), Scheme.
- Attend and participate in any relevant forums as detailed by Macmillan Cancer Support.
- Provide presentations and talks to promote and familiarize others with the MacMillan Project.
- Develop as appropriate relationships with other professionals in cancer treatment and support.
- Provide qualitative and quantitative feedback to allow the monitoring, evaluation and promotion of the MacMillan Project.

3. Social Policy:

- Keep up to date with current research and campaigns issues.
- Participate in research and campaigns activity by providing information about clients' circumstances and actions on behalf of clients.

4. Learning and development:

- Provide mentoring and support to staff and volunteers delivering welfare benefits advice.
- Keep up to date with legislation, case law, policies and procedures and undertake training appropriate to the role.
- Identify own learning and development needs and undertake training appropriate to the role and training required by the funder.
- Prepare, attend, and participate in regular one-to-one meetings, (Supervision), and Annual Appraisals.

This job description is an outline only and the post holder will be expected to carry out other duties commensurate with the role.

Person Specifications

Criteria	Essential
1.	Recent experience of providing outcomes driven welfare benefits casework to the Advice Quality Standard or the ability and willingness to undergo intensive training to provide this.
2.	A good understanding of the skills and techniques used in interviewing clients through a range of channels including telephone, digital and face-to-face.
3.	The emotional resilience necessary to work empathetically and professionally to support people affected by cancer.
4.	The ability to monitor and maintain own standards, prioritize work and meet deadlines and targets.
5.	An organized approach to work and the ability and willingness to follow set procedures concerning casework and file management.
6.	The ability to analyse and interpret complex information and to communicate effectively in writing with particular emphasis on negotiation and representation skills and on preparing letters and submissions.
7.	Good oral communication skills and the ability to communicate well with a wide cross section of people including members of the public, statutory and non statutory agencies.
8.	A flexible approach and the ability to work as part of a small team.
9.	The Citizens Advice Certificate in Generalist Advice or an ability and willingness to achieve this qualification.
10.	An understanding of and commitment to the aims, principles and policies of the Citizens Advice service including a strong commitment to equality and diversity.
11.	A commitment to continuing professional development including a willingness to develop knowledge and skills.
12.	An ability and willingness to travel to provide advice, attend training and meetings when physical attendance is necessary.