

# Thinking about volunteering at Citizens Advice Rushmoor?

**citizens  
advice**

Our guide to starting  
your voluntary career

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The Citizens Advice service gives free, confidential advice on every subject from debt, benefits, housing and employment, to law, immigration and health.

Citizens Advice also works for change. It recommends improvements to local and national policy based on the experience of our clients' problems.

Volunteers are at the heart of the Citizens Advice service, and we value them highly. We offer full training, pay travel expenses and cover car parking costs.

Citizens Advice is committed to equality; we value diversity and challenge discrimination. We welcome volunteers from all backgrounds and ages (15 and over).



# Frequently asked questions ...

## What do volunteers do?

Citizens Advice Rushmoor relies on volunteer advisers to deliver nearly all of our “front line” advice service to the public, through roles ranging from Receptionist, Information Assistant, Digital Adviser (Webchat and Email), Telephone Adviser, Gateway Assessor, Full Adviser, Caseworker and Research & Campaign worker.

Work ranges from the quite simple to the very complex to meet client needs. Volunteers work in teams, supported and supervised by experienced colleagues and backed up by a wealth of information resources and specialist support.

## What time commitment is required?

We ask for a minimum of 4 hours per week, but most volunteers give more, to allow time for ongoing training, follow up work, reading and case recording.

A single day may be preferred, or time can be spread over different “shifts”. We try to be as flexible as possible to allow for outside commitments.

A commitment to 6 training events or staff meetings is asked for over a year, but we can be flexible on this.

## What training is provided?

Initial induction covers all roles, with further training leading to certificates for Gateway Assessors and Advisers. Training is a combination of self-instruction packs, “e-learning”, in bureau support, tutorials, observations, skills practice and external taught courses with other volunteers.

Training is accredited to national standards. The programme can be condensed into a short time, or extended to suit external commitments – this can be agreed with your individual supervisor.

Opportunities to specialise and develop skills on more complex subjects is ongoing, including training to keep up to date with changing legislation, or gain more in-depth knowledge.

## What do you look for in volunteers?

We do not ask for any formal qualifications, but we do look for:

- Comittment to work within the aims, principles and equality policies of the service
- Ability to interact with and respect others
- Openness to new ideas and willingness to learn

## Ann's Story - 66

*I was training as a nurse in the Navy many years ago and was invalided out. I brought up three children and at 50 I started volunteering.*

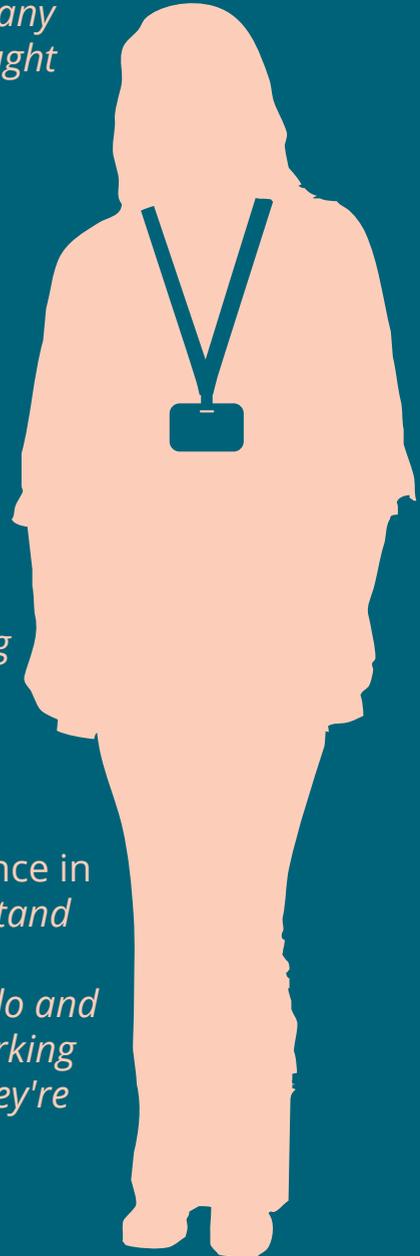
Ann has been volunteering for 16 years now.

*Why Citizens Advice? - I wanted to do some voluntary work and saw an advert and thought it was the best way to use my experience.*

*Why Citizens Advice and not somewhere else? - I wanted something that was challenging. I've always done some sort of voluntary service from the age of 14 or 15.*

*Do you feel you are making a difference in your community? - Yes I do. I cannot stand injustice. If I can help people that are wrongly treated then it's what I like to do and I want to carry on as long as I can. Working with the other volunteers is brilliant, they're great bunch.*

*It's important in life to help others!*



# Meet our volunteers

# Joseph's Story - 21

Started volunteering at just 16 years old, now a law student in his 3rd year. Joseph was walking past Citizens Advice and looking for something to do.

*What do you like about it? - Well everyone is friendly you get to help people and they have a great biscuit supply! You meet lots of different people. I've come across real problems that real people have, some that you would never have thought of. It is taught me patience and empathy.*

*It has connected me with people; it wasn't what I was expecting. It's helped me to define what I do and do not want to do in life. I know that I don't want to be stuck behind a desk; I know that I want to be working with people and be connected to them.*

# Max's Story - 24

Max is a postgraduate law student and on placement two days a week with Citizens Advice.

*My primary reason for volunteering was to gain experience in client contact, case management and admin, and I was advised that Citizens Advice was an ideal choice.*

*What do you get out of it? - It has helped me increase my life experience with dealing with clients problems and the issues they face.*

*I would highly recommend it to other people.*

# James' Story - 21

James undertook his University placement with Citizens Advice and he joined the Research and Campaigns team as a coordinator.

*With friendly volunteers and exciting and varied opportunities, Citizens Advice is an extremely worthwhile experience.*

*From the beginning I was involved in carrying out my own research for campaigns that tackled the problems that our clients face.*

*With the varied roles that I have experienced, dealing with difficult client situations and the expert training I have received.*

*The varied roles that I have undertaken, my experience of dealing with difficult client situations and the expert training I have received will all prove invaluable when I complete the final year of my degree.*

*The work I have carried out with Citizens Advice will provide a wealth of experience for my future career.*



## Margaret's Story - 72

*There is only so much polishing you can do ...*

*Why did I volunteer here at Citizens Advice? - When I retired I had time on my hands and I didn't want to sit doing nothing.*

*What do I get out of it? - It's interesting and challenging; hard at times. Legislation is always changing but it keeps your mind active. I really enjoy the company it gives you great satisfaction.*

*I care about people and feel that I make a difference and make a difference in my community. Making life a little better for people where you can is very rewarding.*

## Carole's Story - 51

*How did you end up here? - Well, I was looking for something to do while I had young children - they are grown up now and at university.*

*Why Citizens Advice? - Because I thought it would suit my skill set and background.*

*What do you get out of it? - No two days are the same. It's always challenging and interesting. It's good to feel that you've helped in a little way to solve people's problems and I feel I make a difference. The people you work with are great fun and all very different, such a mix of ages, from students to those in their early 80s.*

*It got me out of the house!*

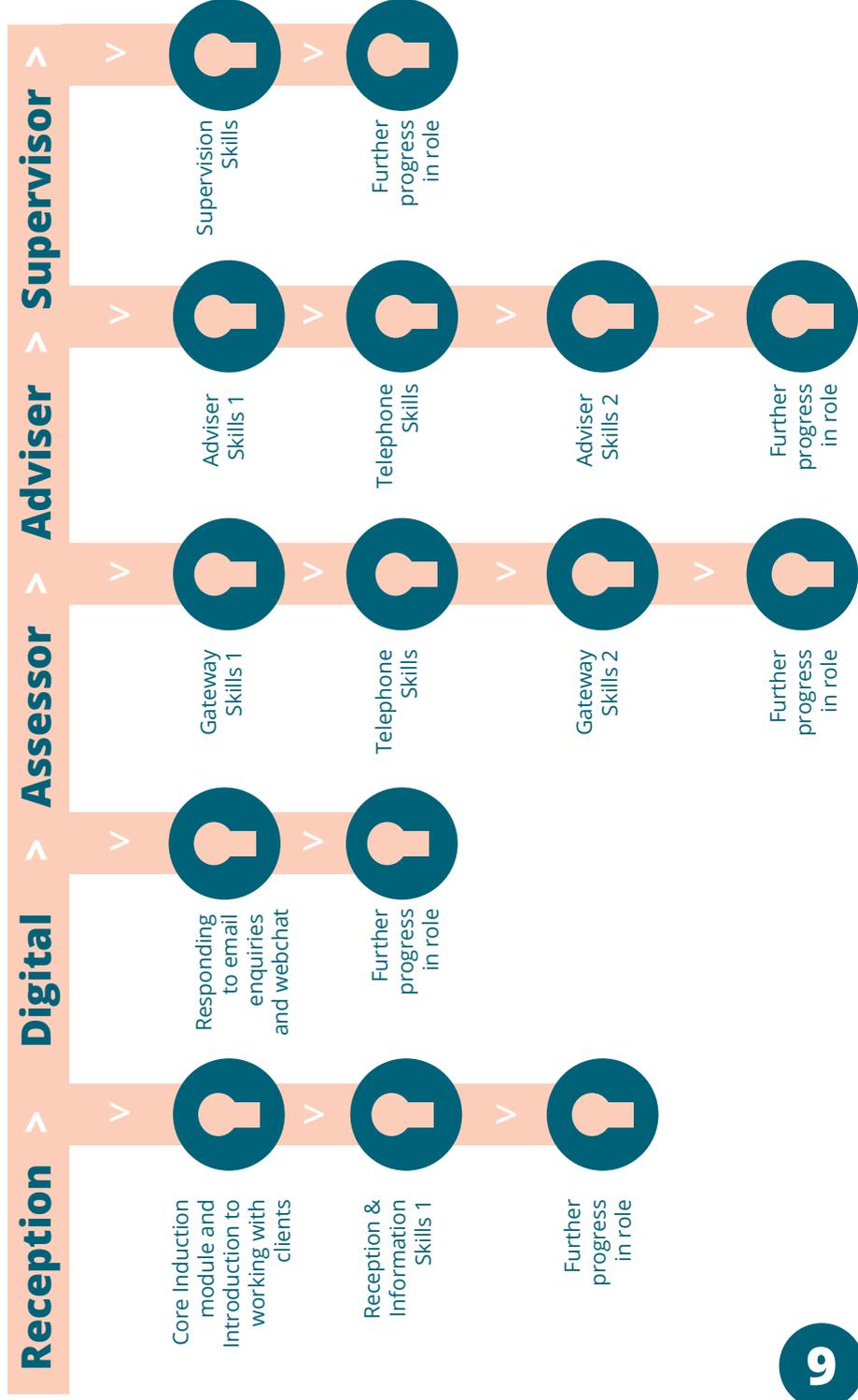
# How will my skills evolve at Citizens Advice Rushmoor?

Citizens Advice learning is on a modular basis, with opportunities to develop at each stage.

The map opposite summarises some of those key stages, and how individuals can progress.

At each stage, focused support and comprehensive tools are provided to assist learners, with individuals taking responsibility for their own progression along the defined route.

# Career pathways



# Different roles ...

**Reception:** Great opportunity to gain frontline experience and find out if we are right for you. First point of contact for clients, relevant to most other roles in the service

**Gateway Assessor:** Gain experience across a whole range of advice areas and insight into client issues. Conversion route to full adviser training from here

**Telephone Assessor:** The same training route as for Gateway Assessors, but with additional telephone skills and experience gained

**Adviser:** Full adviser training leading to nationally accredited certification and working to a national Advice Quality Standard

**Specialist:** Opportunities to specialise in and develop casework skills are available for specific subject areas (e.g. welfare benefits, housing, debt) and/ or to work at Heathlands where dedicated casework is undertaken for clients with mental ill-health.

**Advice Supervisor:** Experienced advisers are encouraged to use their skills to support colleagues with service delivery and development. Plays a key role in supporting quality, developing individual volunteers.



# **Free, advice. Whoever you are.**

**We help people overcome their problems  
and campaign on big issues when their  
voices need to be heard.**

**We value diversity, champion equality, and  
challenge discrimination and harassment.**

**We're here for everyone.  
Face to face at our centres  
in Aldershot, Farnborough  
and Heathlands.**

**We can help you by  
telephone on 03444 111 306  
or via email and webchat as part  
of the National Digital Advice Project  
via [citizensadvice.org.uk](https://citizensadvice.org.uk)**

# For More Info ...

There are a number of roles for volunteers in Citizens Advice Rushmoor suiting many different goals for volunteering - short term, medium and long term.

This leaflet touches on just a few of the key ways you can help deliver our important service, and some of the skills you can develop along the way.

Contact us for an informal chat about career and development opportunities if you haven't already done so:

Aldershot: 01252 333 618

Farnborough: 01252 513 051

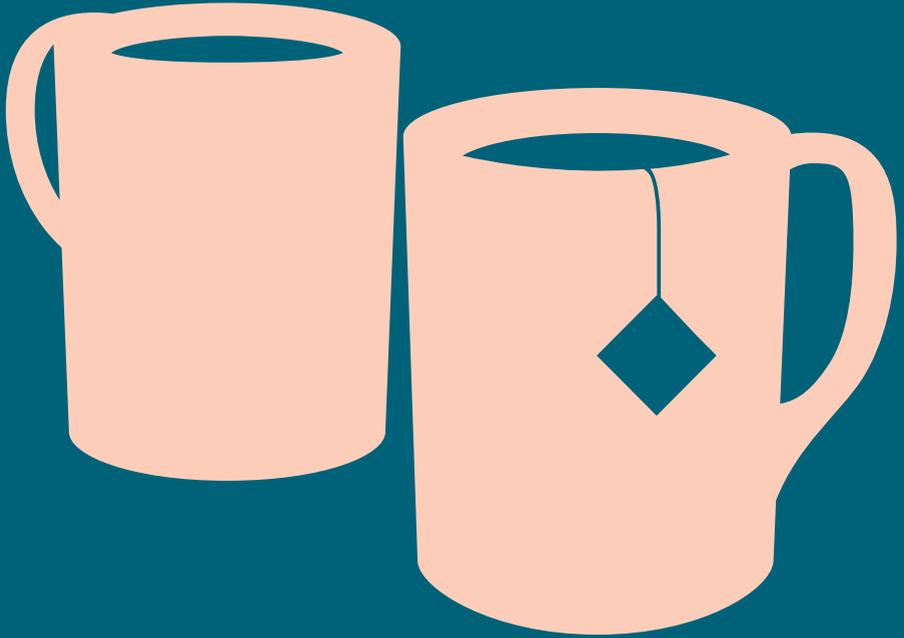
Volunteer line: 0746 886 0449

Alternatively, you can email us at:

**[volunteers@citizensadvicepushmoor.org.uk](mailto:volunteers@citizensadvicepushmoor.org.uk)**

Or visit our website and following the links on volunteering on the homepage to see which roles are available and there is web form where you can submit an expression of interest.





**We look forward  
to meeting you!**



**[citizensadvicerrushmoor.org.uk](https://citizensadvicerrushmoor.org.uk)**

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