

**citizens  
advice**

**Northumberland**

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**Job Vacancy Pack**

**July 2024**

# **Welfare Benefits Support Officer**



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## Message from our Chief Executive - Abi Conway

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"Thank you for your interest in joining our team at Citizens Advice Northumberland. As an employee, you would play a critical role in supporting our network of Citizens Advice across Northumberland and nationally, and helping to make society fairer.

We have provided this information pack to help you decide if a role with us is right for you. We value each member of our team and encourage them to bring their unique skills, experience, views, and commitment to our goals.

Citizens Advice Northumberland offers vital advice and information to people from all backgrounds on a wide range of issues. We provide our services through face-to-face consultations, online chats, and telephone advice. By doing so, we make a difference in communities across Northumberland and beyond, and ensure people are aware of their rights. Joining our team is powerful and rewarding.

If you decide to apply, we look forward to hearing from you and discovering what you can bring to our team and this role."

**Abi Conway - Chief Executive**  
**Citizens Advice Northumberland**



## About Citizens Advice Northumberland

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Citizens Advice Northumberland provides information and advice services across Northumberland, nationally and campaign for changes in legislation and practices. Every year we assist over 31,000 people and help them deal with over 71,000 different problems.

The Citizens Advice service

- Provide the advice people need for the problems they face
- Improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives

The service provides free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. It values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination.

At Citizens Advice Northumberland we work with clients to sort out any debt worries and claim all the benefits they may be entitled to. We help with housing and employment problems, or deal with queries about consumer or tax issues. We advise on legal matters, answer questions about immigration, and we have a lot of experience on family and personal matters too.

We are a charity, dependent on a workforce of paid staff and trained volunteers. Our funding comes from Northumberland County Council and other major contributors.

We speak up for change in social policies; from our clients' experiences we can see where services and policies are failing.

We are a member of "Citizens Advice", which provides the extensive information system we use to advise clients and sets standards for advice, training, equal opportunities and accessibility in the bureau.

Citizens Advice Northumberland as well as giving general advice manages a variety of projects.

## Employee Benefits

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Our people are our greatest strength and make Citizens Advice Northumberland a great place to work. We place our people at the forefront of everything we do and we offer a wide range of benefits to show how much we value everyone who works for us.

Employees benefit from:

- Being part of a committed team who work together to bring about positive changes for individuals, local communities and society as a whole
- Structured Personal Development process with clear opportunities to develop yourself professionally and your career within the organisation
- Full training appropriate to the role
- 36 days annual leave (including bank holidays) for full time employees
- Access to our Employee Assistance Programme
- Northumberland Community Bank payroll savings scheme
- Enrolment in the Company Pension Scheme
- Flexible working conditions (level of flexibility will depend on the service and role)

Citizens Advice Northumberland is a Disability Confident and Living Wage employer and has signed the North of Tyne Good Work Pledge.

## How to Apply

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### Application Form

We do not accept CVs, instead the application form plays a part in our recruitment and selection process. We use the information you provide about your skills, experience – both volunteering and paid work, training and education history to decide whether or not to invite you for an interview.

It is important that you complete the application form as fully and accurately as possible, ensuring that you give specific examples which demonstrate how you meet each point on the person specification.

Please complete your application and submit it no later than the closing date and time referred to in the advert. You can find full guidance notes available to download and the application form on our website at [www.citizensadvicenorthumberland.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvicenorthumberland.org.uk) .

### To find out more about the role contact:

Alison Darnton

E: [recruitment@citizensadvicenorthumberland.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@citizensadvicenorthumberland.org.uk)

T: 01670 618008





## About the role

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### Welfare Benefits Support Officer

We are recruiting a Welfare Benefits Support Officer to provide support to the Welfare Benefits team by carrying out a range of administrative tasks and activities that prepare clients to receive welfare benefits advice.

We are looking for a highly motivated individual who has experience of working in a fast paced administrative position, is reliable, and can demonstrate a willingness to learn and develop quickly.

You will have exceptional communication and organisational skills and a passion for the aims and objectives of Citizens Advice Northumberland.

- **Job Title:** Welfare Benefits Support Officer
- **Salary:** £23,088 - £24,088 depending on experience
- **Hours:** As part of our commitment to being a flexible employer, applications are welcomed from candidates who are able to offer anything up to 37 hours a week.
- **Location:** Ashington
- **Closing date:** 9.00am Monday 22 July 2024
- **Interviews:** Thursday 25 July 2024

## Job Description

**Position:** Welfare Benefits Support Officer

**Responsible to:** Welfare Benefits Service Manager

**Role Purpose:** To provide administrative support to the welfare benefits advice team and provide support to clients in advance of their appointment and progress their case after they've received advice.

### Main Duties and Responsibilities

#### 1. Supporting Clients:

- Be the main point of contact for welfare benefits advice referrals.
- Carry out an initial check with clients upon receipt of referral to establish primary needs, record initial information and refer on to other parts of the service where necessary.
- Book and/or change appointments as required.
- Prepare clients for welfare benefits advice by contacting them in advance of their appointment outlining the expectations and helping them to gather relevant information, including a risk assessment where necessary.
- Process information received from the client to contribute to the progress of their case.
- Contact third parties to update them on the client's situation or obtain information.
- Handle contacts from clients within agreed timescales.
- Support clients in a professional manner and with sensitivity and confidentiality to their situation.
- Support clients to complete basic forms over the telephone

#### 2. Administration

- Process inbound and outbound referrals to the service.
- Answer, action or forward incoming letters, calls and emails to the relevant team member.
- Set up cases on the Citizens Advice CRM system.
- Provide written confirmation of all appointments.
- Manage the diaries of Welfare Benefit Caseworkers.
- Prepare letters and other documents on behalf of caseworkers.
- Contribute to updating team resources including letter templates and leaflets.
- Gather and record advice outcomes.
- Set up and maintain casework and other administration systems as required.
- Maintain client records to required standards on the organisation's management information system.
- Record and distribute minutes from welfare benefit team meetings.



## Job Description

**Position:** Welfare Benefits Support Officer

**Responsible to:** Welfare Benefits Service Manager

### Main Duties and Responsibilities

#### 3. Research and campaigns

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

#### 4. Learning and development

- Read relevant publications to maintain knowledge and expertise.
- Keep up to date with legislation, case law, policies and procedures and undertake training appropriate to the role.

#### 5. Other duties

- Uphold the aims, policies and membership requirements of the Citizens Advice service and demonstrate a strong commitment to equality and diversity principles.
- Work cooperatively with colleagues to encourage good teamwork across the organisation.
- Contribute to the general administration needs of the organisation.
- Develop and maintain links with statutory and non-statutory agencies and promote the work of the organisation in a positive and constructive way.
- Prepare for and attend relevant supervision sessions / staff meetings / trustee board meetings as required.
- Adhere to the organisation's information assurance policies and procedures and report any breaches or incidents of non-compliance.
- Abide by health and safety guidelines and share responsibility for your own safety and that of colleagues.
- Undertake any other duties that are consistent with the level of the post and ensure the effective delivery and development of the organisation's services.

## Person Specification

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### Essential Requirements

1. An understanding of and commitment to the aims, principles and policies of the Citizens Advice service including a strong commitment to equality and diversity.
2. Recent and substantial experience of providing administrative support in a busy office environment.
3. A friendly and approachable manner, particularly on the telephone.
4. The ability to draft routine correspondence and to write clearly and precisely.
5. The ability to type quickly and to accurately produce word processed letters documents, financial statements and reports to a high standard.
6. The ability to monitor and maintain own standards, prioritise work and meet deadlines and targets.
7. An organised approach to work and the ability and willingness to follow set procedures concerning case recording and file management.
8. Good numeracy skills and the ability to check calculations.
9. Good oral communication skills and the ability to communicate well with a wide cross section of people including members of the public and external agencies.
10. The ability to work flexibly with a variety of individuals and organisations and to earn and maintain the trust of those people with whom the organisation works.
11. The ability to give and receive feedback objectively and sensitively and a willingness to challenge constructively.
12. The ability to work as part of a team and to respond positively to change.
13. A commitment to continuing professional development including a willingness to develop knowledge and skills.
14. Good ICT skills and the ability to ensure the best use of IT systems and packages in the provision of advice services.

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[www.citizensadvicenorthumberland.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvicenorthumberland.org.uk)



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