

Citizens Advice County Durham -Trustee Application Information

Trustee Role Description

Our trustees play a vital role in making sure that Citizens Advice County Durham achieves its core purpose. They oversee the overall management and administration of the charity. Citizens Advice County Durham is also a limited company and our Trustees also act as company directors. They ensure that we have a clear strategy and that our work and goals are in line with our charitable purposes, priorities and aspirations.

Charitable purposes, priorities and aspirations

Like all charities, our charitable purposes are set out in our Articles of Association – in summary to promote the advancement of education, the protection and preservation of health and the relief of poverty sickness and distress, particularly for the people of County Durham.

We are affiliated with National Citizens Advice, dedicated to giving trusted advice in times of change.

Our purpose “We exist to shape a society where people have far fewer problems”

- Provide advice fit for the future
- Close the gap – end disparities in access and experience for marginalized people
- Take early action – prevent more people reaching crisis by taking action earlier

Our watchword “We are the People’s Champion”

We have an ambitious strategy and want to do the most we can with the resources we have got; continuing to carefully manage and maximise those resources.

How Citizens Advice County Durham works

Citizens Advice County Durham delivers both local general advice services for the people of County Durham as well as national and regional specialist advice services. We specialise in Debt, Benefits, Energy, Employability and Health, but cover aspects of the whole adult advice spectrum.

As well as providing advice, we also campaign for change to ensure that people are not adversely affected by legislation. Both nationally and locally we have been able to provide a data-driven voice to convince authorities to make changes to avoid people being worse off in the future.

We are funded primarily through contracts we secure with Durham County Council and via National Citizens Advice.

We have about 75 paid members of staff and about 65 volunteers.

What we achieve (figures from 2023-24)

Nationally

- 67 million pageviews of website advice
- 2.68 million helped by phone, email, webchat or in person

Locally

- 28,039 clients helped with 128,201 issues
- Two-thirds is direct advice for people of County Durham
- The rest is National projects – e.g. Help to Claim, Help Through Hardship
- Over £74m income gains, debts written off, reimbursements etc.

What are we looking for in our Trustees?

You don't need specific qualifications but you'll need to:

- understand and accept the responsibilities as a Trustee and be willing to commit the time required - average about 6 hours per month (excluding induction) for at least 3 years
- be a team player, preparing well for meetings and contributing constructively to Board discussions, exercising good judgement and respecting the views of others
- be in tune with Citizens Advice aims, principles and policies, including confidentiality, data protection, safeguarding and equity, diversity and inclusion
- be willing to undertake a full induction and ongoing training in your role

What will you do?

- complete an introduction for your role – this is a very detailed two-day induction which can be spread over times that work for you
- read papers for meetings and attend four Board meetings (one in person, three remote) and two Away Days (in person) per year
- join one of our subcommittees and attend four remote meeting per year
- work on specific projects with other trustees or staff to further our strategic objectives
- actively participate in discussions during meetings and work with other trustees to:
 - set policy and strategy direction (with input from the Senior Executive Team), set targets, evaluate performance and manage risk
 - monitor our financial position and controls (with guidance from our Treasurer) ensuring that we operate within our means and objectives and use our resources wisely
 - ensure that we look after our staff, volunteers and clients, maintaining good working practices, appropriate safeguarding and prioritising equity, diversity and inclusion
 - ensure that we meet our membership obligations with National Citizens Advice and our legal obligations as Charity Trustees and Company Directors
- participate in an annual Board appraisal to review the work of the Board, considering how effectively we operate and action for improvement
- provide feedback for the Chair as requested, monitor and respond to ad hoc emails
- keep up to date with training and look for opportunities for self-development
- represent the Board at internal and external events such as local staff or volunteer meetings, County Day (our all staff Away Day), meetings with local partners etc.

You are welcome to email our Chair, Jen Smurthwaite jennifer.smurthwaite@citizensadvicecd.org.uk to organise an informal chat to learn more about the role. We really hope you will consider joining our passionate and supportive team of Trustees and help us to continue to make a real difference for those in our community who most need our support.

How to apply?

To apply please send by email to Jen Smurthwaite jennifer.smurthwaite@citizensadvicecd.org.uk a CV (or outline profile) and a short supporting statement detailing why you want to be a Trustee and what skills, experience or unique perspective you could bring to the role. This will be followed by shortlisting and an interview process.