

Voluntary Advice Work with CAB

About this leaflet

This leaflet aims to answer some basic questions you may have about volunteering for the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).

Although you might like to volunteer for reception or administration work, this leaflet focuses mainly on volunteering as an adviser.

1 What do volunteers do?

Horsham CAB relies on voluntary advisers to deliver nearly all of its 'front line' advice service.

This means working on a variety of issues, both complex and simple, on which clients consult us every day.

Enquiries may relate to:

- social security benefits
- consumer rights
- taxation
- debt problems
- credit
- housing
- work problems
- family & relationship problems
- the legal system
- local services & groups
- health & disability
- neighbourhood & personal problems
- immigration & nationality
- human rights
- education
- travel & much more

Advisers work in teams, with support from supervisors and managers. There is a range of information and specialist support to enable them to deliver a high quality service.

2 What do we look for in a volunteer?

We provide full training. We do not ask for formal qualifications or experience, although any specialist knowledge will be well used.

What we do look for is:

- Ability and willingness to work within the aims, principles and equal opportunities of the CAB service
- Good communication skills
- Ability to interact with and respect others
- Openness to new ideas and willingness to learn

3 Why do people volunteer?

Here are some of the comments from existing voluntary advisers at Horsham CAB:

"Job satisfaction with training and support"

"Superb colleagues"

"Helping make a difference to people's lives"

"Never boring or humdrum"

"A satisfying way of keeping the brain active and helping others at the same time"

"Interesting, varied, challenging, satisfying"

"Working with people of a like mind"

"Interesting, rewarding and demanding"

"Friendly, supportive team"

4 What commitment is required?

We would like you to be able to offer 2 days per week. This may consist of interviewing sessions, follow up work, and reading and writing up reports. This time may be spread over different 'shifts', as the bureau is open every weekday plus Monday evening.

Our aim is to be as flexible as possible to allow for outside commitments.

A minimum of 6 training events and staff meetings should be attended over the course of a year.

5 What training is provided?

All advisers must complete the national 'Basic Training Program' common to all CABs.

This is a combination of:

- working through learning packs in your own time
- tutorials in the bureau
- observation
- supervised interviews
- practical exercises
- Two 4-day area courses which are held locally

The training can be condensed into a short time, but on average takes approximately 6 months.

After basic training is completed, further 'post basic' training is available on more complex subjects.

Ongoing training is provided to enable experienced workers to keep up to date, or to gain more in-depth knowledge.

6 Do volunteers specialise?

As CAB work has become more complex, the opportunities for specialisation have increased.

The sort of issues where we have ongoing cases, sometimes requiring representation – and more detailed knowledge of the law include:

- welfare benefits
- money advice
- employment
- housing

Whilst generalist work suits many advisers, as it provides the greatest variety, specialisation can offer a lot of satisfaction, where the caseworker sees the end results.

Administration
Telephone Line:
01403 261 916

citizens
advice
bureau

If you would like to know more

If you would like to know more about volunteering, or just have an informal chat about the work involved, please contact:

Mrs Beatrice Hobson Bureau Manager

Horsham & District

Citizens Advice Bureau

Lower Tanbridge Way, Horsham

West Sussex RH12 1PJ

Tel: 01403 261 916 *Administration line*

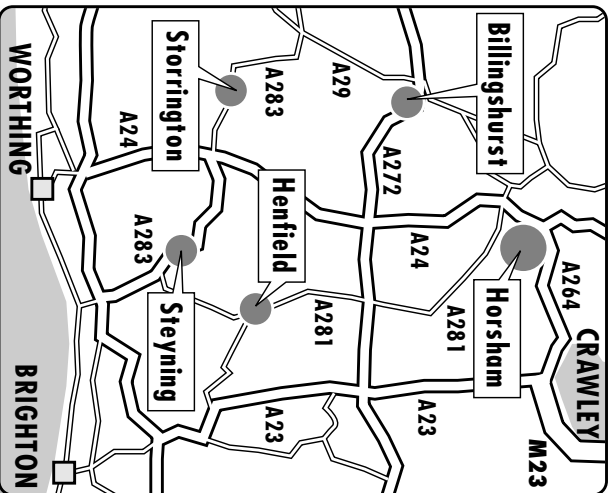
Fax: 01403 218 548

You may like to help at any of our extension bureaux at:

- Billingshurst
- Storrington
- Henfield
- Steyning

We also hold sessions at:

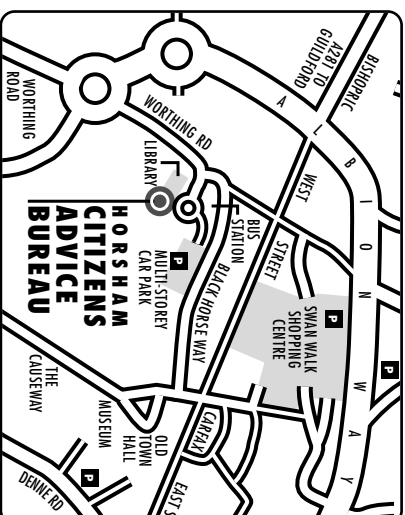
- Horsham County Court
- Horsham Hospital



Important Role of the Volunteer

The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) gives free, confidential advice on debt, welfare benefits, housing, employment, law and much more. It is independent, impartial and committed to Equal Opportunities for all.

- CAB works for change. It recommends improvements to local and national policy based on experience of client's problems.
- CAB values its volunteers. 90% of people in CAB service are volunteers. We pay travel expenses and free parking is available.



Horsham & District Citizens Advice Bureau is a registered charity
Registered Charity No. 247389

**Horsham & District
Citizens Advice Bureau**

Lower Tanbridge Way, Horsham
West Sussex RH12 1PJ



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Administration Line: 01403 261 916
Fax: 01403 218 548

**Horsham & District
Citizens Advice Bureau**



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Voluntary Work
with the
Citizens Advice Bureau
at Horsham
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**Some questions and answers
about what is involved...**
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