**Disability Benefits Specialist (Volunteer)**



**What will you do?**

* complete an introduction to Citizens Advice and training for your role
* complete paper and online forms for disability benefits with clients: Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance
* explore client’s circumstances and barriers being faced and refer or signpost to other support services available to clients
* write a summary of the clients’ problems and what action you have taken and add to our national database (Casebook)

Some examples of what you could do:

* support a client who has acquired a brain injury and PTSD, which limits their ability to undertake daily activities to complete a claim for Personal Independence Payment
* helping a mother apply for Disability Living Allowance for a child that has been diagnosed with ADHD
* supporting someone whose husband has been diagnosed with dementia to claim Attendance Allowance who needs support through day and night
* provide information and guidance to help a client prepare for a medical assessment as part of their benefits application and build evidence related to their claim
* Encouraging and reassurance clients regarding their rights and entitlement



**What is in it for you?**

* make a real difference to people’s lives
* supporting a team of qualified advisers, providing a wide range of support to over 5,000 clients every year, including around 44% who declare a disability or long-term health condition
* gain in-depth knowledge about specific issues, including how different medical conditions affect people’s ability to undertake day to day activities
* build on valuable skills such as communication, questioning and listening, interpreting information and summarising
* continuous training and development opportunities
* increase your employability
* work with a range of different people, independently and in a team
* have a positive impact in your community

And we will reimburse expenses too.

If you are training to be a solicitor and you train and volunteer as a local Citizens Advice adviser, you may be able to get up to six months off your solicitor training contract. See [Solicitors Regulation Authority](https://www.sra.org.uk/trainees/training-contract/training-contract-applications.page) for more information.

  **What do you need to have?**

You do not need specific qualifications or skills, but you will need to:

* be friendly and approachable
* be non-judgmental and respect views, values and cultures that are different to your own
* have excellent listening skills
* have excellent verbal and written communication skills
* have good maths and IT skills
* be able to understand complex information and explain it to others in a way that is easy to understand
* be willing to learn about and follow the Citizens Advice aims, principles and policies, including confidentiality and data protection
* be willing to undertake training in your role
* have a drive to undertake further research and development to support clients, including staying on top of current legislation

 **How much time do you need to give?**

We ask for a minimum of 8 hours per week, which can be over one day or spread over two days, for at least 12 months.

We can be flexible so come and talk to us.

 **Valuing inclusion**

Our volunteers come from a range of backgrounds, and we particularly welcome applications from disabled people, people with physical or mental health conditions, LGBTQ+ and non-binary people, and people from Ethnic Minority communities.

If you are interested in becoming a Disability Benefits Specialist Volunteer and would like to discuss flexibility around location, time, ‘what you will do’ and how we can support you please contact us.

 **Contact details**

Thomas Irvine – Support Coordinator

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