



Citizens Advice St Albans District (CASTAD) Student Placements – Summer and Academic Year

Purpose of role:

- To help provide an effective and efficient advice service to members of the public.
- To help influence government and other organisations by informing them of the effect of their actions on the lives of clients.

Availability:

- We ask that you are available to volunteer full-time for a minimum of 12 weeks from late June/early July to mid-September for the summer scheme or for 6 months full-time or 12 months part-time for the academic year scheme.
- This amount of time allows you to complete the training and get the most out of putting your knowledge into practice.

Main duties and responsibilities:

- Being clients' first point of contact by providing either face to face or telephone reception services.
- Ensuring clients are prepared for upcoming appointments including reminding them to supply documents requested
- Supporting supervisors in day to day client related tasks.
- Supporting the office manager in office related tasks.
- Helping clients by answering email and which involves:
 - Identifying what the client wants
 - Assessing the client's problem
 - Identifying key information including time limits and emergencies
 - Researching the client's problem and identifying relevant information
 - Providing the client with appropriate information and explaining it clearly.
- Recording all interactions with clients on the case management system.
- Helping clients by answering telephone enquiries if we feel you are ready for this.

Discrimination:

- Identify if there is any question of discrimination.
- Be aware of CASTAD's procedures for dealing with actual and potential discrimination issues.

Social policy:

- Identify social policy issues.
- Assist with social policy work by providing information about clients' circumstances through the appropriate channel.

Training

- A comprehensive training programme will be provided, including group sessions and self-study in the office. No studying will be expected outside of your volunteering hours.

Administration:

- Use IT for record keeping.
- Ensure all work conforms to CASTAD's systems and procedures.
- Communication when not in the office will be via email.

Reporting to: The Advice Services Manager

Personal skills and qualities needed:

- Strong self-motivation and a keen desire to learn
- A commitment to the aims and principles of Citizens Advice including the Service's Equality & Diversity Policy.
- An understanding of equality and diversity issues and the willingness to examine and challenge own preconceptions.
- Respect for views, values and cultures that are different to own.
- Excellent communications skills.
- Being open and approachable.
- Ability to communicate clearly both orally and in writing.
- Ability to sift quickly through information and extract what is relevant.
- Basic mathematical skills, including percentages.
- An understanding of why confidentiality is important.
- Competence in using IT.
- A positive attitude to self-development and assessment.
- Ability to recognise own limits and boundaries of the role.
- Flexibility and willingness to work as part of a team.

What you will gain by joining one of the Student Schemes:

- Satisfaction of helping others
- Make a positive difference to the local community
- Meet new people and make new friends
- Learn new skills and share existing ones
- Try something new and take on new challenges
- Build confidence and self esteem
- Enhance life and career plans
- Improve your employability
- Employment references can be provided
- Great work experience for your CV and interviews