

Find out more

If you think that you would like to volunteer for your local citizens advice bureau, then get in touch.

You can find your nearest CAB in a number of ways:

- Use the contact details below
- Look in the phone book under "Citizens Advice Bureau"
- Visit the Citizens Advice Scotland website - www.cas.org.uk

Your local CAB is:



Leaflet produced by Citizens Advice Scotland

Charity number SCO 16637

Recognised as a charity by the Inland Revenue

1st Floor, Spectrum House

2 Powderhall Road

Edinburgh EH7 4GB

Tel: 0131 550 1000

www.cas.org.uk

Published May 2005

make a difference feel the difference

use your energy and wisdom

impart your knowledge

be part of your community

it makes you feel good if you help someone with a problem

you can help make the difference





Feel good about making a real difference

All over Scotland, people like you are helping to improve people's lives when they volunteer in their local citizens advice bureau - and that feels great! As well as the satisfaction from seeing the difference you make, you'll learn new skills that will remain with you no matter what you do next, and make friendships that can last a lifetime.

No wonder so many people choose to be CAB volunteers. How about you?

What does it take to be an adviser?

All sorts of people volunteer as CAB advisers and provide free, confidential, independent and impartial advice. There are some things bureau advisers have in common, though.

CAB advisers:

- are good listeners
- work well in teams
- can read and write English, and do basic arithmetic
- are open-minded and don't judge people or their circumstances
- enjoy helping all kinds of people
- are prepared to commit 4 to 6 hours each week
- are willing to learn new skills
- feel good about the difference they make

You don't need special skills or knowledge to be an adviser, as your bureau will give you all the training you need. We'll even pay expenses, and volunteering needn't affect your benefits either.

Training, support and development - all the way

Being a volunteer adviser can sound a little daunting, but don't worry! From the very first day you start at the bureau you will be given all the help you need to start helping people and making a difference to their lives.



What does an adviser do?

The role of a CAB adviser is very varied. Some of the things advisers do in the bureau are:

- interview clients at the bureau, by phone or in person. Some also give advice by email
- use the CAB service's Electronic Information System (EIS) and other sources to give information to clients
- explain the choices the client faces, and what these choices mean
- if needed, offer practical help to clients by writing letters, making phone calls and helping fill in forms
- perform calculations (for example, to check if clients are entitled to certain kinds of benefits)
- refer clients to other agencies if they are better placed to help
- keep confidential records of clients' cases
- prevent future problems by identifying issues that affect a lot of clients. This information can then be used to try and change laws, regulations and business practices - this is called "social policy" work
- in some cases, representing clients at tribunals and other legal settings

Becoming a confident adviser

The Scottish CAB service has developed a comprehensive, integrated training programme to prepare you for advising.

The programme is a clear, staged approach to helping you develop the skills and knowledge you'll need in the bureau. It combines observation, shadowing and supported interviewing with training sessions run in the CAB, all supported by an extensive set of training units.

You'll begin with an introduction to the work of the bureau and how it runs. Next, you'll move on to shadowing experienced advisers (often known as mentors) to gain experience of the interview process.

Once you and your mentor feel you're ready, you'll begin leading interviews yourself with support and feedback from your mentor. This stage continues until both of you feel confident that you're ready to become a bureau adviser.

If you want to, you can choose to undertake further training and develop specialist skills such as employment tribunal representation or money advice.

And remember - there will always be someone in the CAB that you can go to for guidance or support.

Does this sound good? *If so, we want to hear from you!*