

Citizens Advice Plymouth Trustee Recruitment Pack

2025/2026



**citizens
advice**

Plymouth



Paul Matthews
Chair

Welcome to Citizens Advice Plymouth!

We are delighted that you are interested in joining the Board of Citizens Advice Plymouth and hope you find the information included in this pack helpful in supporting your decision.

As the Chair of Trustees, I work with a group of Trustees who collectively oversee the work of Citizens Advice Plymouth.

Citizens Advice Plymouth employs over 185 people plus 50 volunteers who work both locally and nationally to support people who have problems with debt, housing, welfare benefits, employment and many other advice areas. Our aim is to provide the advice people need to solve the problems they face and to improve the policies and practices that affect people's lives.

The Board of Trustees has an interesting and challenging task to ensure that the governance and finances of the charity are correct and to advise and support the senior leadership team.

Our Trustees are not paid for their work, but it is my belief that volunteering should be intrinsically rewarding. I have gained great satisfaction from seeing the growth of our organisation through the toughest of times, from the strong and supportive relationships within the Trustee Board and from the knowledge that we help to meet the needs of many clients who are well supported by the service that we provide.

We are committed to further diversifying our Board to represent the communities that we serve across Plymouth. We would particularly like to hear from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds and LGBTQ+ groups. We are also currently seeking to redress our current imbalance so we would particularly appreciate female applicants.

If you are inspired by what you read here and can offer the skills and experience required to strengthen our Board, we want to hear from you!



**Emma Handley Chief
Executive Officer**

Hello!

I have been in post at Citizens Advice Plymouth for 10 years and before that in other Citizens Advice offices in Teignbridge and South Hams. I live and breathe the organisation and its sense of purpose in making a difference to the clients that we offer our services to. I believe in social justice and would like to see our board become more diverse and one that reflects the wider community of Plymouth. We have a lot to do in terms of tackling the poverty and deprivation that exists in the city and would like to attract people who would like to support us in advancing our purpose.



About us

Citizens Advice Plymouth is a resilient, creative and independent small-medium sized charity. It is part of the Citizens Advice national network of over 2,500 organisations that delivers advice and information across England and Wales.

Our main purpose is to deliver quality advice and information. We engage with clients through a range of routes including email, webchat, telephone and face-to-face contact.

We can all face problems that seem complicated and intimidating. At Citizens Advice Plymouth, we believe that no one should have to face these problems without good quality, independent advice.

Citizens Advice Plymouth is part of a network of independent charities that offers free, confidential, impartial advice and information on a wide range of issues to everybody, regardless of race, religion, gender, disability or sexuality.

Our trained advisers have vast experience in offering advice and guidance when it is needed most. Our advice includes:

- * Benefits
- * Consumer problems
- * Debt and Money
- * Employment
- * Family
- * Health
- * Housing
- * Immigration
- * Law and Courts

We have a clear set of strategic aims. These allow us to provide the advice and support people need for the problems they face and work towards changing policies and practices that affect people's lives. We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination.

To find out more about us, [**click here**](#).



Client Testimonials

*"It's the service and people that gives so much hope to continue on in difficult times.
Thank you so so much."*

*"CAB is a great help to the people like me who don't know where to go for help and
advice about our present conditions. They are blessings."*

*"You are bloody amazing! Can't thank you enough, I'm so glad I came to see you
instead of burying my head in the sand. I've been feeling so much better."*

*"I've had Citizens Advice fight my corner a few times in this difficult life we are all
living at the moment. I've felt like I can breathe after. Just makes me feel a little
better that I have someone on my side and I am not alone."*

*"I am truly grateful for your working with me. I am only just coming to realising how
much help is out there. So, thanks again it will definitely improve my quality of life."*

*"I just wanted to say a big thank you for all your help and support, you brought
some brightness into the darkness I faced! Without you realising, the empathy and
compassion that you have shown me especially in the first phone call was more than
I ever expected from a stranger and I appreciate that with my whole heart and soul
because your patience and understanding has given me the strength to fight for
what is right and fair for me and my children."*

Figures and Facts

Achievements in 2023/2024



53,241
people
contacted
Citizens Advice
Plymouth



429,852
Issues were
raised by
people



63%
of our clients
were assisted
with debt
issues



£60,887,174
Income gain for
all persons
helped



Over £8mil
Of debt was
written off for all
persons helped



6,669
people
from Plymouth
got help from
Citizens Advice



1,887
Household Support
Fund applications
received



28%
Increase in
Plymouth
clients helped
compared to
2022/2023



**Exceeded
£4.9mil**
Income gain for
people living in
Plymouth



Over £1mil
Debt written
off for people
living in
Plymouth

Our income to end of March 2024 was over £5million. You can read more about our accounts on the [Charity Commission website](#).



Organisation Structure

Citizens Advice Plymouth is led by our CEO, Emma Handley, who leads a team of 235 staff and volunteers. There are:

- * 3 members of the Leadership Team,
- * 3 Senior Operations Managers and
- * 26 managers leading operational delivery of advisers,
- * caseworkers,
- * administrators,
- * research, campaigns and communications team,
- * IT,
- * Finance,
- * HR and
- * Learning and Development.



Who we're looking for

We currently have 9 Trustees and are looking to strengthen our Board of Trustees with 2 new Trustees, who can use their professional and lived experiences, skills and talents to contribute to the on-going success of the Charity.

We are specifically seeking individuals who offer experience in one or more of the following areas:

- * Chair designate. Someone who will become Chair of Trustees once inducted and have a thorough understanding of the organisation. We expect this to be in 6-12 months depending on time commitments.
- * Finance and accounting (not necessarily within a charitable setting, but this would be beneficial) in order to succeed as Treasurer in 2 years
- * Leadership experience within a charitable organisation
- * Previous experience as a Trustee or governor
- * Local involvement in the City of Plymouth

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

- * understand and accept the responsibilities and liabilities of Trustees
- * be non-judgmental and respect views, values and cultures that are different to your own
- * have good listening, verbal and written communication skills
- * be able to exercise good independent judgment
- * have good numeracy skills to understand accounts with the support of the treasurer
- * 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

We encourage and welcome people who are suitably skilled from all backgrounds. We particularly encourage people who are disabled, or people from Black, Asian and minority backgrounds and LGBTQ+ groups, and people under 30 as these people are currently under-represented at Board level. We are also seeking to redress our current gender imbalance so we would particularly appreciate female applicants.



What will you do?

- Complete an induction to familiarise yourself with the organisation and role of Trustee.
- Maintain an awareness of how the local Citizens Advice is operating.
- Read papers for Board meetings and attend 1 meeting per month:
 - * 4 Board meetings per year (ideally in person but hybrid offered)
 - * Up to 4 sub-group meetings per year (online)
 - * 2 Strategy days per year
 - * You will be invited to attend ad hoc meetings, site visits and events
- Work on specific projects with other trustees or staff within the local Citizens Advice to further the strategic objectives of the local Citizens Advice.
- Take part in an active discussion during Board meetings and work with other trustees to:
 - * set policy and strategy direction, set targets and evaluate the performance of the local Citizens Advice
 - * ensure that all the finances and supporting financial control systems of the local Citizens Advice are in order including that full financial records are kept for all transactions, that money is only spent for the purpose given, and that proper financial controls are in place to safeguard the organisation's resources
 - * monitor the financial position of the local Citizens Advice ensuring that it operates within its means and objectives, ensuring that there are clear lines of accountability for day to day financial management
 - * Monitor risk management, Human Resources management, business relationships and contracts with outside agencies.
 - * comply with all the legal requirements of Trustees as set out by the Charity Commission.
 - * Fulfil the role of "critical friend" to the Chief Executive Officer and Senior Leadership team.



What's in it for you?

- * Make a positive impact for people in your local area by ensuring the local Citizens Advice is sustainable and meeting the needs of the community
- * meet people and build relationships with Trustees, staff and other volunteers
- * build on your governance, leadership and strategy skills
- * increase your employability

And we'll reimburse expenses too!



How to apply

If you are passionate about supporting people in need across Plymouth and would like to offer your time and experience to support this exceptional charity, please contact our retained recruitment partners Public Leaders Appointments for information and a confidential conversation: - _____

Melissa Stewart – melissa@publicleadersappointments.com

In order to apply, please submit a CV or professional bio, supported by a cover letter of no more than 3 sides of A4 pages outlining your motivations for applying (affinity for our vision and mission) and highlight how your skills, knowledge and experience meet the requirements of our new Trustees, as set out in the brief.

We would be grateful if you could also complete and return the attached Equal Opportunities Form.

Applications should be sent to melissa@publicleadersappointments.com **by midday on Tuesday 20th May 2025 with reference 'CAP'.**

Citizens Advice Plymouth:

- * Have a robust Diversity and Equality Opportunities Policy that Trustees and staff adhere to.
- * Promote the fact that we are a diverse, inclusive organisation, recognising and valuing individual differences and will always challenge discriminatory attitudes or practices.
- * Believe that everyone should have equal opportunities in life no matter their visible or non-visible characteristics which can include race, age, colour first language, ethnic or national origin, religion, community background, political beliefs, gender, disability, appearance, sexual orientation, responsibility for dependents or marital status.
- * Treat all job and volunteer applications equally.

Induction

You will meet with our CEO regularly (in person or remotely) to familiarise yourself with the organisation and understand our current and future priorities and ambitions. The following activities will take place as part of your induction with a review occurring in month 3:

- * You will be encouraged to become involved between Board Meetings in activities that particularly interest you
- * Meeting with the staff and volunteers
- * Familiarisation with the strategy and financial plan
- * Introduction to policies
- * Identifying any additional skills/training you may wish to acquire.

Timetable

- * Closing date for applications: midday, Tuesday 20th May 2025
- * On-site meeting (including meeting with Trustees, site tour and meeting with our CEO): 4th June 2025

If you require the role information in an alternative format or if there are any adjustments which can be made to aid your application or interview process, please get in touch with Melissa Stewart: melissa@publicleadersappointments.com

Citizens Advice helps people find a way forward.

We provide free, confidential and independent advice to help people overcome their problems.

We are a voice for our clients and consumers on the issues that matter to them.

We value diversity, champion equality, and challenge discrimination and harassment. We're here for everyone.

www.citizensadviceplymouth.org.uk



Date of issue: April 2025

Citizens Advice is an operating name of Registered charity number 279057.