



# Citizens Advice Eastbourne

## Join us as a trustee

### **We're seeking new trustees**

We're seeking individuals with strategic vision and a commitment to our values to join our board of trustees. To nominate yourself for this role you do not need to have had past involvement with Citizens Advice, nor is prior experience as a trustee necessary. We are seeking a mix of experienced and first-time trustees, along with a mix of knowledge about Citizens Advice and experience of other environments.

You will need to devote the necessary time, have independent judgement, a desire to contribute, an ability to think creatively and (particularly if you do not have previous trustee experience) a willingness to learn. You will be collectively responsible along with the five trustees already on the board and other new trustees, for directing our strategy and policy. In return you will have the opportunity to support and develop an organisation which plays an important and well-respected role in the civil society of this town, and is a true lifeline for many of its most disadvantaged citizens.

### **Particular skills and experience**

We are keen to improve the mix of skills on our board and are particularly interested in applications from anyone with experience of, and a preparedness to get involved in, fundraising, PR and communications or diversifying our volunteer base. At its heart, however, being a trustee is about ensuring that the charity makes good decisions and safeguards its future, and we will positively consider applications from anyone who shows the desire and ability to help us do this.

We're also keen to have a more diverse board of trustees that can fully represent our town, and we welcome applications from all sections of the community, all backgrounds and all points of view.

### **Expectations of trustees**

You will be asked to attend five board meetings per year, an annual away day and either to join a sub-committee or otherwise become actively involved in at least one area of the charity. In addition, you will need to spend time preparing for these meetings and undertaking any follow up work. As a guide, we anticipate you will be expected to contribute 1-2 days per month, although this will fluctuate through the year.

New trustees will initially be co-opted onto the board, to serve until the next Annual General Meeting in November 2019, at which point, under our constitution, you will be nominated to serve for a full three-year term. Trustees can, of course, resign before that as long as there remain sufficient ongoing trustees for the charity to function, and trustees can also stand for re-election at the end of their three-year term. However, the expectation is that anyone standing as a trustee should be prepared in normal circumstances to serve at least one three-year term in order to provide a reasonable level of stability to the board.



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## Support offered

We pay trustees' travel expenses, provide an induction to the organisation, and can help you to access training. As a new trustee, you will be offered the opportunity to "buddy" with an existing trustee during your first year. As members of the national Citizens Advice network, we also have access to a wealth of online resources, workshops and networking events to help trustees learn more about the role, about Citizens Advice and about what other local Citizens Advice charities are doing.

## To nominate

If you would like to know more about the role, contact our Chief Officer, Alan Bruzon, at [manager@eastbournecab.cabnet.org.uk](mailto:manager@eastbournecab.cabnet.org.uk) to arrange an informal telephone call.

The trustee role description, and information about Citizens Advice Eastbourne, is included in this mailing. For additional supporting information visit:

<http://www.eastbournecab.co.uk/>.

## About Citizens Advice Eastbourne

We provide free, confidential and impartial advice and we campaign on big issues affecting people's lives. Our goal is to help everyone find a way forward, whatever problem they face.

We are part of the Citizens Advice network across England and Wales. However, we are an individual, local charity responsible for our own governance and our own fundraising.

People come to us with all sorts of issues. You may have money, benefits, housing or employment problems; or your problem may be something else entirely. You may be facing a crisis or just considering your options. Whatever your issue, we will explain your rights and we will give you the information you need to understand your options and make informed choices. Wherever we can, we will support you in finding a way forward.

We value diversity, promote equality, and challenge discrimination wherever we see it.

Our service is delivered by a small, highly committed team of paid staff who supervise over 50 volunteers; it is these volunteers who form the backbone of our service. All our volunteer advisors are trained to national Citizens Advice quality standards.

Our client work gives us a substantial evidence base from which we monitor emerging trends and themes. Where we identify these, we use our strong reputation and standing with local policymakers to get changes made that will improve people's lives. For example, in the past year we have agreed a minimum standard of



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temporary accommodation with Eastbourne Borough Council and have released a well-received report on Homelessness in Eastbourne.

## Roles and responsibilities of our trustees

Each individual member of the trustee board has a responsibility to contribute to the discharging of the board's duties. They can do this by:

- maintaining an awareness of the business of the local Citizens Advice
- taking responsibility for their own learning and development
- regularly attending, preparing for and taking a full part in meetings
- actively contributing to setting policy and strategic direction, defining goals, setting targets and evaluating performance
- monitoring whether the service complies with its governing document, whether it meets Citizens Advice standards and how well the advice needs of the local community are being met
- monitoring the financial position and ensuring that the local Citizens Advice operates within its means and objects, and that there are clear lines of accountability for day-to-day financial management
- supporting the development of the local Citizens Advice through participation in agreed projects
- actively seeking to further the strategic objectives of the local Citizens Advice, and acting in its best interests at all times
- maintaining confidentiality about any sensitive or confidential information received in the course of duties as a trustee.

In addition to these, the general duties of trustees are to:

- ensure the organisation applies its resources exclusively in pursuance of its objectives. The organisation must not spend money on activities which are not included in its own objectives, no matter how worthwhile or charitable those activities are
- safeguard the good name and values of the organisation when representing the organisation at functions and meetings
- declare any conflict of interest while carrying out the duties of a trustee
- be collectively responsible for the actions of the organisation and other trustees
- ensure the effective and efficient administration of the organisation
- abide by the Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy
- ensure the financial stability of the organisation
- protect and manage the property of the organisation and ensure the proper investment of the organisation's funds
- make sure the organisation is properly insured against all reasonable liabilities
- appoint and support the Chief Executive and monitor their performance

As well as the above statutory duties of all trustees, each trustee should use any specific knowledge or experience they have to help the trustees reach sound decisions. This will involve scrutinising trustee papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, and providing advice and guidance requested by trustees on new initiatives and other issues.



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## Trustee person specification

Each individual member of the trustee board brings their own unique skills and qualities to the board. They add to the collective knowledge and experience by providing:

- integrity
- commitment and availability to attend trustee board meetings
- effective communication skills and willingness to participate actively in discussion
- willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to their duties as a trustee
- willingness to gain knowledge of local needs and resources
- commitment to the aims, principles and policies of the Citizens Advice service, including those relating to equality, inclusivity and diversity, independence, and research and campaigns
- willingness and ability to act in the best interests of the local Citizens Advice
- ability to understand, and acceptance of, their responsibilities and obligations as trustees and employers
- willingness to participate in democratic process which develops Citizens Advice policies by area and nationally
- numeracy to the extent required to understand accounts with the support of a treasurer
- willingness and ability to learn, and to develop and examine their own attitudes
- ability to think creatively and strategically, and exercise good, independent judgement
- ability to work effectively as a member of a team.