

Trustee Information Pack

Welcome

Thank you so much for showing an interest in becoming a trustee at Citizens Advice Winchester District (CAWD). In this info sheet, we aim to tell you a bit about ourselves and what we are looking for in terms of skills or experience. A lot of being a good trustee is to do with enthusiasm, willingness to give some time to CAWD, and steadfast commitment to Citizens Advice values. So if you have these, together with an understanding that you will be giving strategic direction to CAWD rather than getting involved in day-to-day activities, you sound like just the sort of person we are looking for.

The Charity

CAWD is an independent charity and part of the Citizens Advice network. We provide free, confidential and impartial advice, and campaign on a wide range of issues affecting people's lives.

People come to us with all sorts of issues. They may be related to money, benefits, housing or employment problems. They may be facing a crisis, or just considering their options. Our goal is to help everyone find a way forward, whatever problem they face and we use our clients' experience, stories and evidence to research and campaign for positive change locally and nationally.

We are a local charity with a very small paid team of 10 full time equivalent staff; our advice service is primarily provided by volunteers (around 70). We do not receive any central government or national funding and are totally reliant on local funding and fundraising. We operate within very tight budgets, which are getting tighter, and we rely on donations and fundraising to make ends meet.

We have offices in Winchester and Bishop's Waltham and we provide an outreach service in Alresford, Denmead, Wickham and HMP Winchester. We also have a home visiting service.

Governance of the Charity

CAWD is a registered charity (No 114496) and a company limited by guarantee. The charity's governing document is its Articles of Association. The Charity is governed by a Board of Trustees. The number of Trustees cannot be fewer than three or more than 15.

CAWD's Board of Trustees oversees the governance and overall direction of the organisation; in addition it guides and supports the senior management team in implementing the charity's strategic vision and policies. The Board also ensures that the charity's funds are put to best use in accordance with legal and regulatory requirements.

We are a member of national Citizens Advice from whom we have a great deal of support.

Our Trustee Board

The current Board has 5 trustees. The Board now wishes to recruit 2 – 3 new Trustees both to replace retiring trustees and to extend and deepen our skills. At this stage of our development we are particularly interested in recruiting individuals to the Board who can offer one or more of the following skill sets:

- Treasurer
- Fundraising and other income generation
- Marketing, media & PR
- Interest in or knowledge of premises issues
- IT

It isn't necessary for trustees to have direct experience of Citizens Advice although if you do this is helpful. What is important is for trustees to be committed to the charity's mission and objectives and to be prepared to work with enthusiasm and energy to help the charity fulfil its goals.

If you may be interested in joining the trustee board, but do not hold the above specific skills, we'd still be interested to hear from you, and could discuss how your skills and experience may benefit the Board of Trustees.

Specifically, as part of our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, Citizens Advice Winchester District wants to strengthen the board to better reflect the diversity of our society and the communities we serve. We would like to recruit people with different experience, perspectives and lived experience as well as contributing skills particularly in relation to building partnerships and collaboration across communities and sectors, financial management and service change and improvement.

The Role of the Trustees

- To ensure that CAWD complies with its governing document and relevant laws
- To ensure that CAWD pursues its objectives as defined in its governing document
- To ensure CAWD uses its resources exclusively for those objectives
- To contribute actively to the Board of Trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to CAWD, setting overall policy, defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against agreed targets
- To safeguard the good name and values of CAWD
- To ensure the effective and efficient administration of CAWD
- To ensure the financial stability of CAWD
- To protect and manage the property of CAWD and to ensure the proper investment of the charity's funds
- To appoint the Chief Officer and monitor their performance

- To use any specific skills, knowledge or experience to help the Board of Trustees reach sound decisions.

This sounds like a daunting list but we give individual roles to each Trustee, fitting in, if we can, with their own preferences and skill set, so no-one is overloaded and we work very much as a team supporting and advising each other. Trustees are not paid although reasonable (eg travel) expenses can be reimbursed.

Time Commitment

The Board of Trustees meets formally four times a year. Meetings alternate between morning and late afternoon and are held either in central Winchester or online if required. Ad-hoc working groups are established from time to time to take on short-term projects. In between Board meetings, informal meetings are held if business needs require it and all Trustees are invited to these. There is an understanding that trustees can't always get to every meeting.

Trustees are also involved in occasional strategic planning sessions with the staff and are invited to attend the charity's external events, fundraising exercises and volunteer meetings. A full induction programme is available to new trustees in the first 6 months to ensure they get a good understanding of Citizens Advice and can contribute effectively to the Board's work.

Person Specification (essential skills and experience)

1. Strong strategic skills (able to develop a clear understanding of where CAWD should be heading – what changes are needed, what are the threats to CAWD, how can we deal effectively with them)
2. Strong analytical skills (able to understand complex information, solve problems and think critically and creatively)
3. Excellent interpersonal skills, including being able to work effectively as a member of a team, as well as a willingness to voice own opinions.
4. Understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
5. Experience of using good, independent judgement to solve problems or achieve aims
6. Numeracy to the extent required to understand accounts with the support of a treasurer
7. Willingness and ability to learn, and to develop and examine their own attitudes
8. Commitment to the work of Citizens Advice in general and to the Winchester District specifically
9. Willingness to devote the necessary time and effort

Citizens Advice values diversity, promotes equality and challenges discrimination. We encourage applicants from all backgrounds and particularly welcome applications from disabled people and from black, Asian and minority ethnic people, who are underrepresented in our organisation. You do not need to have experience of being a trustee, and training will be provided.

Interviews

These will be held in early June, in our Winchester office.

For further information please contact:

admin@cawinchesterdistrict.org.uk. Our team will ask you for your contact details and for a CV if you have one handy (not essential), and will ask our Chair, Sarah Gooding, to get in touch with you. We look forward to hearing from you!