

Housing Solicitor

Job Pack

Thank you for your interest in working at Citizens Advice Bury & Bolton. This job pack should give you everything you need to know to apply for this role and what it means to work for the Citizens Advice service.

In this pack you’ll find:

* Our values
* 3 things you should know about us
* How the Citizens Advice network works
* Information about the organisation, team and the role
* The role profile and person specification
* The benefits of working for the organisation
* Our approach to equality and diversity

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| **Want to chat about the role?**If you want to have a chat about the role further, you can contact **Gemma Walsh** (Housing Services Manager) by emailing gwalsh@cabb.org.uk |

# As a member of the Citizens Advice service, Citizens Advice Bury & Bolton (CABB) provides free, confidential, independent and impartial advice and information to everyone on their rights and responsibilities. We value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination.

# We are committed to putting equality and equity at the heart of everything that we do, with the overarching aim of being the go-to charity for anyone in our borough in need of help, to find a way forward. This means we look at improving access, treating people with empathy and promoting an inclusive working environment for all of our colleagues.

# Our values

**We’re inventive** - We’re not afraid of trying new things and learn by getting things wrong. We question every idea to make it better and we change when things aren’t working.

**We’re generous** - We work together, sharing knowledge and experience to solve problems. We tell it like it is and respect everyone.

**We’re responsible** - We do what we say we’ll do and keep our promises. We remember that we work for a charity and use our resources effectively.

# 3 things you should know about us

## We’re local

We have offices based in Bury & Bolton but assist clients all over Greater Manchester. Last year, we supported 14,000 clients with 46,000 issues, including Welfare Benefits, Money Advice, Housing and Immigration.

## We’re here for everyone

Our advice helps people solve problems and our advocacy helps fix problems in society. Whatever the problem, we won’t turn people away.

## We’re listened to - and we make a difference

Our trusted brand and the quality of our research mean we make a real impact on behalf of the people who rely on us.

# How the Citizens Advice network works

Citizens Advice Bury & Bolton is a

member of the Citizens Advice service nationally with circa 257 local Citizens Advice members.

Citizens Advice nationally is a charity which includes 1000 national staff working in one of 4 offices, as homeworkers or as part of the Witness Service from over 240 courts across England and Wales 2500 Witness Service volunteers.

Local Citizens Advice are all independent charities, delivering services from over 600 local Citizens Advice outlets over 1,800 community centres, GPs’ surgeries and prisons.

The network does this with 7,700 local staff and over 21,300 trained volunteers.

Our reach means 99% of people in England and Wales can access a local Citizens Advice within a 30-minute drive of where they live.

# Citizens Advice Bury & Bolton and our team

The role you’re applying for is **Housing Solicitor.**

We have a full or part time opportunity. The role is part of our Social Welfare Law team and reports to the Housing Services Manager.

You can find out more about us via:

* Take a look at the [Citizens Advice Bury & Bolton](https://www.cabb.org.uk/) website
* Take a look at the [national Citizens Advice](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk) website and the Citizens Advice [Campaigning site](https://wearecitizensadvice.org.uk/).

## The application process

### Stage 1

You are required to submit your CV **and** a cover letter; this will be screened against the role description and person specification.

Your CV & covering letter should be sent to jobs@cabb.org.uk.

Please ensure your CV includes the following information:

* Your contact details (address, telephone number and email address)
* Information about your education history
* Information about your career history
* Details of any professional qualifications including memberships

Please ensure your covering letter includes the following information:

* Your suitability for the role against the person specification outlined below. This is a key part of the process which allows you to provide evidence of your experience, knowledge, skills and abilities that are relevant to the role as described in the role profile.
* At least one example of your previous experience (paid work or volunteering) for each person specification.

**Should this information not be included, your application for the role will not be taken forward.**

Stage 2

Following review of your CV and covering letter to shortlist, we may invite you to complete a short 30-45 minute test. This is a knowledge-based test – an opportunity to demonstrate your technical knowledge and its application to given scenarios.

Stage 3

Pending meeting the required standard in responses at stage 2 (where a test is required as part of the assessment process), you will be invited to a face-to-face panel interview (your invite will state if this is in-person or held via zoom).

Attendance/ engagement in all stages listed above is required to be appropriately assessed if an employment offer is to be made.

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| **Closing date** | Until successful candidate is found |
| **Interview date** | TBC |

# **The Role**

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| **Role** | Housing Solicitor |
| **Salary** | Up to £36294 (pro-rata) dependant on experience and PQE |
| **Hours** | 24-35 hours – We can offer flexible working patterns dependant on the applicants’ circumstances |
| **Location** | Option for home working or in-office working dependant on applicants’ preference following initial induction period. Min 1 day per week covering our face to face drop in sessions in Bolton or Bury - with some occasional travel for Court Attendance is required. |
| **Reporting to** | Housing Services Manager |

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| The Citizens Advice services across Bury & Bolton, are leading providers of advice and information, supporting thousands of clients every year. We are a busy, client focused and dynamic service with a track record of delivering high quality advice. We are now looking to recruit ambitious individuals to join our growing team of advisers and solicitors as part of a planned expansion of the Housing team running under a Legal Aid contract.The team consists of 1 adviser and 2 Solicitors with extensive housing litigation experience, a dedicated administrator and a dedicated staff member responsible for the Legal Aid Financial Eligibility of each client, so that solicitors are fully supported in their role and can concentrate on the advice/litigation only.The Housing Solicitor will handle their own Legal Aid caseload of matters from instruction through to completion, acting on behalf of tenants, including but not limited to:* Possession Claims for rent arrears both private and social sectors
* Possession claims under accelerated procedure
* Anti-social behaviour injunctions
* Unlawful Eviction Injunctions
* Disrepair Claims
* Homelessness s204 appeals to the County Court
* Judicial reviews

*At CABB, we value diversity, promote equality and challenge discrimination. We encourage and welcome applications from people of all backgrounds. We particularly welcome applications from disabled people, people with physical or mental health conditions, LGBT+ and non-binary people, and people from racially minoritised communities.* |

## **Role Profile**

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| **Key accountabilities** | **Key elements & tasks** |
| Supporting clients | Delivering advice and advocacy direct to clients under Legal Aid Agency contracts |
| Negotiate with the other side, other authorities and obtain sources of evidence from other agencies as required, to progress cases effectively  |
| Prepare, as required, case/court papers and ensure that these are correctly recorded along with key dates etc in the format specified by relevant stakeholders, and to ensure contract compliance |
| Meeting agreed targets as set by your line manager |
| Act for the client where necessary using appropriate communication skills and channels |
| Support our research and campaigns work through various channels including case studies, data collection and client consent |
| Working as part of a team  | Take part in peer to peer file reviews and quality of advice assessments  |
| Work collaboratively demonstrating teamwork with CABB colleagues, project partners and external stakeholders |
| Promote best practice across the team |
| Performance, Personal Management and Administration | Take ownership for monitoring all elements of own workload e.g. proactive management of referrals, progress on current cases, outcome of completed cases and quality control, with minimal supervision |
| Comply with data collection procedures and reporting to ensure effective recording of performance monitoring, outcomes and client information |
| Keep up to date with legislation, policies and procedures and undertake appropriate training. |
| Work with your line manager to develop an annual learning and development plan which meets your development needs and the needs of the organisation. |
| To comply with operational management systems of supervision, objectives, appraisal and induction and attend regular team meetings |
| Service Development | Work with colleagues to maintain a positive working and learning environment, in which equality and diversity are well managed, dignity at work is upheld and volunteers achieve their full potential |
| Carry out other tasks within the scope of the post to ensure the effective delivery and development of the role |
| Training | To identify your own training needs in conjunction with the designated lead/ supervisor and be prepared to undertake appropriate training in line with your training and progression plan |
| Other duties and responsibilities | Be an active member of the wider team, acting and supporting colleagues in a collaborative way |
| To present a professional appearance, help maintain an orderly working environment, and act at all times to uphold the good reputation of Citizens Advice |
| To comply with all published organisational policies and procedures |
| Work flexibly to undertake such other reasonable duties and responsibilities |
| Please note that this job description does not constitute a ‘term and condition of employment’. It is provided only as a guide to assist an individual in the performance of the job and is not included to be an inflexible list of tasks.The Citizens Advice Service is a fast-moving organisation and therefore an employee’s duties may be varied from time to time. The post holder accepts that they may be required to work flexibly and undertake any other work or duties as may reasonably be required, within the scope of and commensurate to the nature of the post. |

## **Person Specification**

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| **Essential** |
| 3 Years PQE with at least 1 year Experience of delivering advice and advocacy in housing / debt. |
| Experience of working within the remit of a Legal Aid Agency contract |
| Experience of liaising with courts / tribunals and other legal bodies to reach a positive client outcome |
| Ability to effectively communicate as appropriate to the audience, including accurately drafting letters, reports and complex applications and presenting work in a clear layout, both orally and in writing |

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| **Desirable** |
| Minimum of 3 years PQE experience working in housing law and ideally would be qualified for 3 years+ |
| Qualified 3 years+ and hold a valid practising certificate |
| Broad understanding of other Social Welfare Law subject areas |
| Current/ previous recent experience of court duty desk work |
| Ability to meet billing targets of x2 of your salary |
| Meets the civil supervisor status for Legal Aid Agency contracts |
| Proficient in the use of CCMS including the use of delegated function and amending scope and limitations |
| Experience in carrying our peer to peer file reviews |
| Ability to recognise and advise / refer where appropriate in relation to other advice areas including debt and welfare benefits |
| **Core** |
| Ability to contribute to an **inventive**, **generous** and **responsible** organisational culture in line with our values |
| Ability and willingness to work as part of a team and a commitment to collective team responsibility |
| Understanding of, and commitment to, the aims and principles of the Citizens Service in which equality and diversity is embedded throughout |
| Proven ability to use IT packages, including, word processing, spreadsheets, presentation packages, email (maintain an electronic diary) and the ability to use or learn to use other packages as necessary |
| Commitment to continual professional development, including a willingness to develop knowledge and skills in advice topics |
| Awareness that Citizens Advice clients are at the heart of everything we do. |

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# What we give our staff

We value the people who work here - and we show that in what we offer. As well as things like annual leave and our workplace pension, working at Citizens Advice means getting access to many benefits.

* [Citizens Advice Bury & Bolton employee benefits package](https://www.cabb.org.uk/work-with-us/)

# Equality and diversity at Citizens Advice

We are fully committed to stand up and speak up for those who face inequality and disadvantage. We want this to be reflected in the diversity of the people who work for us.

To help us achieve this, we aim to make our recruitment process as fair as it can be. We also offer support to disabled candidates to make sure no one loses out on a role because of their condition.

**We judge the application, not the person.** The selection panel won’t see your personal details. This makes sure each person’s response is judged on its merits and not on their background.

Our commitment to equality runs through everything we do - read the [Citizens Advice Stand up for Equality Strateg](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/Global/CitizensAdvice/Equalities/CAB337_Equality_strategy_text_FINAL.pdf)y to find out more.

# Additional information

Please see the ([CABB website](https://www.cabb.org.uk/recruitment-policy/)) for information on the following:

* Disability
* Entitlement to work in the UK
* Diversity monitoring
* GDPR: How we will use your information
* References
* Criminal Convictions/DBS

We wish you every success in your application and thank you for taking the time to consider joining us.