

Volunteering

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. I'd like to volunteer but I'm not sure which role would be best?

A. We have lots of roles available. If you haven't already done so, have a look at the volunteer pages at www.cabfife.org.uk to see what's involved. You can also watch a video where volunteers talk about what their experience is like. Which role you'd like to take on will be discussed when we first meet you, so don't worry if you're still not sure. You can try out different roles and always change your mind later! Specific experience isn't required but we do need you to be able to work without judgement and respect the confidential nature of our service.

Q. Do I need to be able to use a computer?

A. In short, yes. We do have a couple of roles where your computer skills are much less important. If you'd like to help people fill in some of the lengthier benefit claim forms, only a small amount of computer use is necessary. Alternatively, some of our Financial Inclusion Volunteers may be more involved in helping with group activities with clients than updating their records. However, everyone in the organisation uses email and the intranet for communication and information sharing, so all roles have some computer requirements.

Q. How long does the training last?

A. IT depends. Training for all roles is a mix of knowledge based learning and some practical experience. The basic training programme for advisers runs for around 14 weeks. Basic training for other roles will usually take around four weeks. Dates for upcoming face-to-face training are on our website. The time it takes to be fully competent in any role will be dependent on individual's skill, experience and time commitment.

Q. How much time do I need to give?

A. It depends on the role. Advising tends to need the greatest commitment with approximately 6-8 hours per week. Other roles probably require a bit less of time commitment but almost all office based roles require a regular weekly commitment to help us run a full service to clients. We understand that you will have holidays and other

commitments from time to time. We will be flexible around these but it's helpful for co-ordinators planning rotas to know about these in advance.

Q. Is it possible to have a taster of volunteering?

A. It will be possible to meet with staff and volunteers and tour an office whilst you're thinking about volunteering but due to the confidential nature of our service it won't be possible to sit in with client interviews.

Q. I'd like to volunteer. How do I apply?

A. You can click 'contact us' on our website, email volunteer@carfonline.org.uk, call us and an application form will be sent out or pop into an office and someone can give you a form to complete.

Q. Where do I send my application form to?

A. The address is on the last page of the form or you can drop it off at one of our offices.

Q. The form asks for two referees. Who should I ask?

A. That's up to you. It could be a previous employer, college lecturer, teacher or someone who has known you for a reasonable length of time and can comment on your ability to work within our principles.

Q. I sent my application in. What happens next?

A. Your form will be sent to the appropriate office or team co-ordinator who will contact you to arrange an informal interview in your local office. We try to do this as quickly as we can but it may take a couple of weeks. If you think it's been longer than that, get in touch with us.

Q. What should I expect at the interview?

A. It's fairly informal. We're interested in you, why you want to volunteer and why you're interested in volunteering with us in particular. It's a chance to discuss the different roles

that are available in a bit more detail and for us to get to know each other a little. We want to make sure you can get what you need from your volunteering experience and you understand what's involved in the roles you have an interest in.

Q. What happens after the interview?

A. We'll contact you soon after to let you know whether you have been successful or not. If you have, we'll give more information about when training will start and we'll write to your referees for references. How soon you start may depend on your role and when training is scheduled.

Q. When does training start?

A. The dates for scheduled training programmes for adviser training and advice assistant training are on our website. Training for other roles is arranged individually.

Q. I have other commitments when the face-to-face sessions take place. Can I still volunteer?

A. It's possible to undertake a lot of the knowledge based adviser training online. However, there are some sessions where face-to-face attendance is compulsory. We will try and be flexible about making alternative arrangements if possible.

If you have a question that isn't answered here, please contact us using one of the methods mentioned earlier.