
Citizens Advice Scotland

The role of the volunteer-led CAB
network in Challenging Poverty.

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Director of Advice
Services



What is the Citizens Advice Network?

The Citizens Advice network in Scotland is made up of:

- > 59 local **Citizens Advice Bureaux**, each its own independent charity.
- > **The Extra Help Unit**, a group of specialist case workers dealing with energy issues.
- > **Citizens Advice Scotland** as the membership body itself.





Twin Equal Aims

The Network has two aims which are equally important:

- > We provide free, independent, impartial and confidential advice and information to ensure that people are not disadvantaged by lack of knowledge of their rights and responsibilities, or through difficulty in expressing their needs effectively.
- > We campaign and influence to tackle the root cause of the problems people face, and to work to strengthen their rights.



Volunteer-led Service with over 1750 volunteers

One of 13 Principles of Association is:

A Voluntary Service: Bureaux must retain the voluntary nature of the service. The service is first and foremost a voluntary service provided principally by volunteers.

All new volunteer advisers undergo the adviser training programme, as appropriate, to meet the required competences for their roles. Social policy volunteer workers and volunteers receive ongoing training to maintain the required competences for their roles



Volunteer-led Generalist Service



Our Volunteering

Volunteers are the lifeblood of our bureau network, with over 1,750 people giving their time and commitment to our bureau as:

- Volunteer adviser
- Administrator / Receptionist
- Social policy coordinator
- Tutor
- Mentor
- IT, Communications and social media
- Trustee

Our comprehensive bureau volunteering training and support provide volunteers with a unique experience, gaining valuable skills and knowledge.



Volunteers Adviser Role

- Provide compassionate assistance and support.
- Ensure client confidentiality.
- Conduct diagnostic interviews.
- Offer information and advice.
- Help clients understand their options.
- Provide practical assistance.
- Negotiate on clients' behalf.
- Maintain accurate case records.
- Identify social policy concerns.



Training to be an Adviser

Every new CAB trainee adviser follows the Adviser Training Programme (ATP) in preparation for the role as generalist adviser.

This blended learning programme includes practice and assessment, as well as guidance and support, and enables trainees to gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are required of their role.

CAS provides materials and resources to enable bureaux to deliver this programme. Trainees access the programme online through our training management system CASlearn.



Adviser Training Programme



Training and Support for Volunteers

- Online self-directed learning and taught sessions ranging from 7 modules to 48 modules.
- Our training program covers inductions to the network and essential topics such as benefits, money and debt, housing, employment, and immigration.
- Allocated line manager.
- Regular case checking feedback.
- 1-1 meetings.
- Ongoing training and briefing sessions.
- Mentoring.



Social Policy volunteers and coordinators

- Social policy volunteers are an important part of the networks volunteer base
- These volunteers work to influence change around a social policy issue which can be a policy or practice that negatively impacts on the wellbeing or welfare of our clients.
- Social policy work is about identifying problems and then influencing and changing the policies that are causing them, for the benefit of both existing and future CAB clients.
- Our data and evidence are key to advocating and campaigning for change



Meta Skills



Impact on Volunteers



“The work can definitely be stressful at times, but I also find it extremely rewarding – especially when you can hear the client’s relief in their voice after you present them with options they weren’t aware they had,”

CAB volunteer



Volunteer Motivation

- The most common motivation (**89%** of respondents) for choosing to volunteer with a CAB service was the desire to help people and make a difference.
- **54%** of respondents chose to volunteer as an opportunity to learn new skills.
- **38%** of respondents highlighted the social aspect of volunteering as a motivation to volunteer at their bureau.



Impact on Well-being

Client satisfaction research found;

- 95% reported they were satisfied with the service provided by CAB
- > 95% said they would recommend a CAB to others
- > 91% stated that the service met or exceeded their expectations
- 91% felt that the support they received increased their confidence in dealing with issues in the future

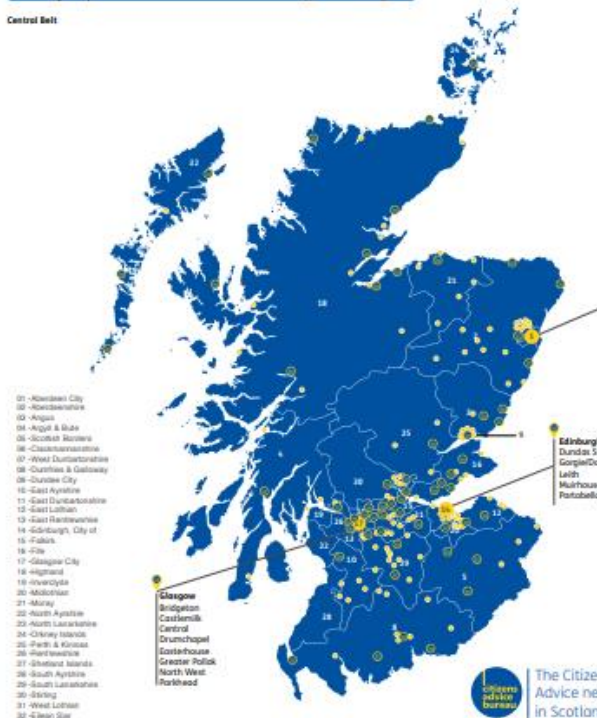


Community based

Building wealth in every corner of Scotland



Central Belt



The Citizens Advice network in Scotland



The Impact of Citizens Advice Bureaux

Citizens Advice Bureaux are a lifeline for many in their local community - but it's not just the people that get advice that gain from their work.

- > Employment Opportunities
- > Increasing Knowledge and Skills
- > Empowering people to resolve their issues
- > Influencing social policy to improve public policy outcomes
- > Unlocking and building community wealth



The Impact of Citizens Advice Bureaux Volunteers

— Of those who benefit, on average
£4,200 
better off

174,500 
people helped by the CAB network last year


2.5 million
people checked our online advice pages in the last year





4 in 10 
cases
CABs deal with are complex and need multiple advice types


We're worth up to
£245 million
in net benefits to Scotland

Nine in ten

people in Scotland have heard of us

Our advice saves the NHS around
£22 million 
a year

 We offer advice
 **in person,**
 **over the phone**
 **or online.**

Our advice is
 **free**  **confidential**  **and impartial**

What's next

We have developed a Volunteering Strategy 2023-27 aiming to improve

- Retention
- Recruitment
- Equality and Diversity
- Skills – SCQF accreditation
- Funding for Volunteering
- Demonstrates and celebrates the impact



**Volunteer in a
Citizens Advice
Bureau | Citizens
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