

Join our Trustee Board

The logo consists of a dark blue speech bubble shape. Inside the bubble, the words "citizens" and "advice" are stacked vertically in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font.

**citizens
advice**

Westminster

Join our Trustee Board

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Join our Trustee Board

Introduction

The Board of Trustees are the first and final decision making authority within Citizens Advice Westminster (also known as Westminster Citizens Advice Bureau Service).

Responsibilities

The Board of Trustees is collectively responsible for the governance of the organisation, including setting an overall vision. This can broadly be defined as:

- holding staff accountable, and being ultimately accountable for the activities of the organisation
- providing leadership to all in the organisation
- developing policy
- strategic management.

The Board is responsible for **governance**: taking a high-level overview of the bureau and its place in the community, and using that to make long-term decisions about strategic direction and values, and to safeguard the good name and ethos of the organisation and the national Citizens Advice service. As the governing body, it has overall responsibility on how the organisation is managed.

The Board and the Chief Officer will work together on **strategic management** - taking decisions on how best to implement the values and strategic direction of the organisation.

The board delegates the **operational management** of the organisation to the Chief Officer - making sure it runs smoothly and effectively - and delivers the service agreed with the Board. This essentially means that the Board gives the Chief Officer duties and powers to represent them, and to manage the organisation on their behalf.

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As a Trustee you will fulfil an important role within Citizens Advice Westminster; your contribution and involvement in the running of the organisation will be very much valued. Citizens Advice Westminster is an incorporated charity and as such all Trustees are the directors of the company ([see booklet CC3 for more information](#)).

Requirements

The Board of Trustees currently meets 4 times a year on a Tuesday evening from 6-8pm for a formal Board Meeting. In addition to this, there is an Annual General Meeting which is held one evening in October/November.

Trustees are expected to contribute at least 8 hours a month of their time, including attending and preparing for meetings. In addition to Board meetings, Trustees are required to sit on one committee according to their area of expertise. Each committee meets 4 times a year, at agreed dates and times. At present Citizens Advice Westminster has the following committees:

- Finance, Premises & Risk
- Human Resources
- Service Delivery
- Fundraising

All Trustees may claim reasonable travel expenses incurred when attending these meetings.

All Trustees will receive a thorough in-depth induction upon appointment, followed by regular skills audits and appraisals.

Citizens Advice Westminster is a member of the National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux (NACAB) which currently trades as Citizens Advice. More information about the membership organisation can be obtained on their website - www.citizensadvice.org.uk.

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1. Main duties and responsibilities for all 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 Citizens Advice Westminster;
- 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 organisation 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 organisation operates within its means and objects, and that there are clear lines of accountability for day-to-day financial management;
- Supporting the development of Citizens Advice Westminster through participation in agreed projects;
- Actively engage and participate in the fundraising activities of the organisation;
- Actively seeking to further the strategic objectives of the organisation, 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.

1.1. Personal skills and qualities of Trustees

Each individual member of the Trustee Board brings skills and qualities to the board. They add to the collective knowledge and experience by providing:

- Commitment and availability to attend full board and committee meetings;

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- Effective communication skills and willingness to participate actively in discussion;
- 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 equal opportunities, independence, and research and campaigns;
- Willingness and ability to act in the best interests of Citizens Advice Westminster;
- Ability to understand and accept their responsibilities and liabilities 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.

Citizens Advice Westminster also has a Code of Conduct for all Trustees.

2. Officers on the Board

In addition to these general tasks and responsibilities, some Trustees will also be officers of the Board, and will have additional responsibilities:

2.1. Chair Role Profile

The Chair should take control of meetings, ensuring that everyone who wishes to has a reasonable chance to speak and take part. She or he should be able to listen to and understand a wide range of views, present information clearly and concisely and get clarification of relevant points, thus

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enabling the board to make effective decisions. The Board must demonstrate its leadership of the organisation. It is the Chair's role to enable the Board to do that.

In addition to the general Trustee Board responsibilities, the Chair will be responsible for the following duties (although in some cases these may be delegated to or shared with other board members):

2.1.1.Chair: Main Duties and Responsibilities

- Ensuring that Board decisions are made within the remit of the governing document and the policies of Citizens Advice Westminster;
- Planning the annual cycle of Board meetings, and chairing and facilitating these to ensure their smooth running;
- Planning the agenda for meetings with the secretary and Chief Officer;
- Developing membership of the Trustee Board to ensure that it contains the diverse range of skills, experience and knowledge needed to operate effectively, with due consideration for community representation;
- Ensuring that successors for key posts - Treasurer, Chair etc. - are identified and inducted in good time;
- Ensuring that Trustees receive induction and adequate training to enable them to fulfil their roles;
- Monitoring the calibre, level of commitment and attendance of all Trustees;
- Ensuring that the Board reviews its own work and how effectively it operates; making sure to take any corrective action required;
- Ensuring that the Board is able to seek the views of all sections of the community served by the organisation;
- Checking that decisions taken at meetings are being implemented;
- Ensuring that the Board reviews the work of the organisation;
- Liaising with the Chief Officer to keep an overview of the organisation's business;
- Providing or arranging for support and supervision for the Chief Officer, including annual appraisal;

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- In conjunction with the Treasurer, ensuring proper management and control of organisation finances;
- Representing the organisation in the community and at public events;
- Representing the organisation in relationships with funders and negotiating for funds for staffing, premises or equipment;
- Ensuring that the organisation plans for the recruitment and turnover of paid staff and volunteers.

2.1.2.Chair: Personal Skills and Qualities

- Leadership skills;
- Experience of chairing meetings and committee work;
- Facilitation skills;
- Tact and diplomacy;
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills;
- Impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences.

It is desirable for the chair to have knowledge of the type of work undertaken by the organisation and a commitment to keeping ahead of the changes in the organisation that take place.

2.2. Treasurer Role Profile

The Treasurer is an officer of the organisation's Trustee Board and not a paid worker. The role of the Treasurer is to ensure that all the finances and the supporting financial control systems are kept in order. The Treasurer is not the bookkeeper. He or she does not hold or maintain the financial records nor is he or she the sole custodian of the cheque book. The Treasurer must delegate day-to-day financial management to the Chief Executive or Finance Manager.

2.2.1.Treasurer: Main Duties and Responsibilities

These duties and qualities are in addition to the general Trustee role profile (section 1).

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- Guiding and advising the Board in the approval of budgets, accounts and financial statements, within a relevant financial policy framework;
- Keeping the Board informed about its financial duties and responsibilities;
- Advising on the financial implications of the organisation's strategic plans and key assumptions in the operational plan and annual budget;
- Ensuring that all Board members have a clear understanding of the accounts presented at meetings and the implications that they reveal;
- Understanding the accounting procedures and key internal controls to be able to assure the Board that the charity's financial integrity is sound;
- Ensuring that a realistic budget is produced which meets all the organisation's needs and that there is an appropriate reserves policy;
- Monitoring the organisation's income and expenditure position, and presenting reports to the Board at least quarterly, in a format accessible to the board members;
- Ensuring that full financial records are kept for all transactions, and that proper financial procedures and controls are in place to safeguard the organisation's resources;
- Ensuring that money received is only spent on the purposes for which it was given, and, where required, ensuring that reports and accounts demonstrating this are submitted to funders;
- Ensuring that accounts are prepared at year-end in compliance with the SORP Accounting for Charities and making arrangements for them to be audited or independently examined, as required by the Charity Commission;
- Ensuring that annual accounts are submitted to the Charity Commission and/or Registrar of Companies, within the deadlines set;
- Presenting the accounts at the AGM and drawing attention to important points in a coherent and understandable way;
- Liaising with the Chief Officer about financial matters;
- Playing a key role in planning a clear fundraising strategy to raise money for future activities and developments;
- Chairing any finance committee, and reporting back to the full Board.

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2.2.2.Treasurer: Personal Skills and Qualities

- Financial qualifications or experience;
- Some experience or knowledge of charity finance, fundraising and pension schemes;
- The skills to analyse proposals and examine their financial consequences;
- Preparedness to make unpopular recommendations to the board;
- Willingness to be available to staff to provide advice and guidance on financial matters.

2.3. Vice-Chair Role Profile

The following duties and qualities, for a Vice-chair, are in addition to those in the general trustee role profile (section 1).

2.3.1.Vice-Chair: Main Duties and Responsibilities

- Carrying out the Chair's duties in his or her absence, with the acknowledgement of the Board as being capable and suitable to do so;
- Providing support and assistance to the Chair in carrying out his or her responsibilities, acting as a 'critical friend' and sounding board;
- Taking on specific responsibilities from the Chair, such as inducting new Trustees;
- Being open to approaches, where appropriate, from other Trustees about the work or judgement of the Chair. The Vice-chair will then discuss any issues arising with the Chair.

2.3.2.Vice-Chair: Personal Skills and Qualities

- Leadership skills;
- Experience of committee work;
- Facilitation skills;

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- Tact and diplomacy;
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills;
- Impartiality, fairness and the ability to respect confidences.

It is desirable for the vice-chair to have knowledge of the type of work undertaken by the organisation and a willingness to keep ahead of the changes to the organisation that take place.

2.4. Company Secretary Role Profile

The Company Secretary is the person who calls, administers and minutes the Trustee Board meetings and general meetings.

2.4.1. Company Secretary: Main Duties and Responsibilities

- Ensuring that all meetings are held and conducted according to the articles of association of the organisation;
- Ensuring that all necessary documentation is sent to Companies House and the Charity Commission within the deadlines set;
- Ensuring that Trustees are correctly appointed according to charity law and the articles of the organisation;
- Arranging and administering meetings, including:
 - making practical arrangements;
 - ensuring agendas and papers are prepared and circulated;
 - ensuring that meetings are properly convened, constituted and quorate;
 - confirming what decisions have been made and monitoring their implementation;
 - ensuring that proper records are kept;
- Providing Trustees with additional information to facilitate decision making, especially in regard to their powers and duties under the articles;

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- Providing the Board with guidance about charity and company law and the provisions of the articles and any associated regulations or documents;
- Ensuring that all general meetings are convened in accordance with the articles, and that any decisions at general meetings, including changes to the articles, are made in accordance with legal requirements;
- Ensuring that insurance requirements are fulfilled;
- Developing and implementing a periodic 'legal health check', to monitor employment procedures, audit the articles, review property leases and so on;
- Ensuring compliance under contractual arrangements and company and charity law;
- Ensuring that stationery, orders, invoices and other documents include all details required under company, charity, tax and other appropriate laws.

2.4.2. Company Secretary: Personal Skills and Qualities

- Organisational ability;
- Knowledge or experience of business and committee procedures;
- Knowledge of charity and company law;
- Ability to become conversant with the provisions of Citizens Advice Westminster's articles and any associated regulations or documents, and to advise on their implications in board discussions;
- Ability to understand the basic principles of relevant legislation, and to identify potential points of contention;
- Ability to exercise independence and professional judgement, especially where the law and / or articles conflict with the wishes of the board;
- Minute-taking experience, if this is not being delegated to staff.

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Join Us?

Citizens Advice Westminster is a charity whose purpose is to serve the local community; providing advice and information on a wide range of subjects, including welfare benefits, debt and money advice, immigration and housing.

We deal with 12,500 clients a year and have an annual turnover of £1m.

At present, Citizens Advice Westminster is looking for skilled Trustees for the following roles to join our board:

- Trustee: Human Resources Committee (x 2)
- Trustee: Fundraising Committee (x1)
- Trustee: Fundraising Committee - Research and Campaigns Lead (x1)
- Trustee: Service Delivery Committee (x1)
- Company Secretary

We are looking for people with strategic vision, independent judgement and a willingness to give time and commitment to being a trustee. The post of trustee is unpaid but will provide you a great deal of experience and satisfaction. All reasonable expenses are reimbursed. We are particularly keen to achieve a more diverse Board of Trustees and welcome applications from all sections of the community.

If you feel you have skills and experience to contribute towards our Trustee Board please download an application form from our website www.westminstercab.org.uk

Please return the completed form (saved as a PDF document) to via email at sitalgohil@westminstercab.org.uk or send it by post to Sital Gohil, Citizens Advice Westminster, 21a Conduit Place, London W2 1HS.

For more information or an informal discussion on the role of trustee, please contact Sital Gohil (sitalgohil@westminstercab.org.uk)