

Information & Advice

Volunteer role profile

Overview:

Assisting with delivery of the Information & Advice (I&A) service to improve the lives of older people across the city, and support, promote and enhance the profile of Age UK Southampton (AUKS).

Age UK Southampton's I&A service provides information and advice to older people on matters such as welfare benefits, health and social care, housing and local services. The team is based in the Shirley area of the city. The team is made up of staff and volunteers and the I&A team are available between 10am – 4pm. Appointments in clients homes are offered where necessary.

What an I&A Volunteer does:

Helping older people who want to know if they could claim welfare benefits is the most common advice enquiry that Age UK Information and Advice services deal with.

- This volunteering role will involve you providing Information & Advice, face to face and over the phone.
- The completion of welfare benefits calculations, using Age UK's software package, through face-to-face appointments with older people and their carers or family. This could be at our office, in the client's home or at an alternative outreach office. In excess of one and a half million pensioners are estimated to be missing out on eligible benefits in the UK.
- Providing guidance to clients on 'next steps' to be taken based on the results of the calculation. This may involve the client making a claim for benefit themselves or you arranging an appointment with a colleague to support them to complete the application.
- Completing records of client interventions and liaising with key staff at Age UK Southampton's I&A service. In providing I&A you will explore the nature of the problem raised by the person and, where appropriate, their wider circumstances. Present and discuss information with the client in an accessible format, enabling them to identify a suitable solution.
- Identify and research information relevant to the user's situation, signposting where necessary to the most appropriate service
- Assist clients with letter writing and form filling; this could include applications for benefits, e.g. Attendance Allowance.
- Where appropriate and at the client's request, to act on their behalf and to refer to other agencies and sources of help e.g. the Local Authority, Citizens Advice Southampton.
- Work closely as part of the I&A Team, seeking advice, guidance and support where required.
- Monthly reporting of volunteering hours to Line Manager

Personal qualities most suited to this role:

The role would suit somebody who is comfortable using the telephone, computers and has experience of using a data system. Experience of working face to face with clients would be beneficial. People who have previously worked in the public sector, such as for the local council, the Department for Work and Pensions, the Health Service or in financial services advising clients would be particularly suited to the role. Any potential volunteer will need to be able to demonstrate:

- Customer focused and enjoys helping people
- Experience of benefits advice / advice services would be beneficial
- A willingness to attend training and support sessions and following training provide at least one benefit calculation session per week (approximately 2 – 3 hours) on a mutually convenient day
- Good writing/oral skills
- Good planning and time management skills
- Good team player
- Good IT skills (Word, Excel, data systems)
- An understanding of the need for confidentiality, data protection and safeguarding.
- The ability to understand written information and explain things clearly without using jargon or being patronising
- Commitment to ensuring that customers are provided with accurate, relevant and timely information and support the ability to write clear notes and record a methodical and orderly approach.
- An open minded approach to individuals, avoiding judgement and stereotyping while demonstrating patience and empathy
- A willingness to undergo a DBS check if working in clients homes.
- A person-centred approach.
- Ability to follow quality assurance processes

This role is subject to an enhanced DBS check (formerly known as CRB check)

How much time is involved: As agreed with your supervisor. Each activity will have its own requirements.

Location: Southampton City

Expenses and Insurance:

We will cover agreed out-of-pocket expenses for volunteers (e.g. travel costs). We will also insure you for the time you are volunteering with us.

Responsible to: Information & Advice Team Leader

Training, Development and Support

- AUKS general and role-specific Induction and where possible, involvement with other areas of AUKS work to understand the range of activities provided
- All Volunteers are required to adhere to Age UK Southampton's policies and procedures at all times, including, but not restricted to, safeguarding, lone-working and confidentiality policies.