

A blue speech bubble containing the text 'citizens advice' in white lowercase letters.

citizens
advice

Darlington,
Redcar &
Cleveland

A woman with shoulder-length brown hair, wearing a blue and green patterned top, smiling broadly with her eyes closed. The background is a wood-paneled wall.

Trustee Recruitment
Candidate Job Pack
October 2024



Hello and thank you for your interest in our work!

We are keen to hear from people who want to give back to their local community, can attend 2-3 quarterly meetings, one strategy day per year, and are committed to continuous professional development and training.

You must be engaged in the process, read all the Board papers and come prepared.

Being a trustee is a rewarding experience for those who want to support vital frontline work and a diverse charity which aims to provide excellent services to our beneficiaries in challenging circumstances.

Robert Murphy, Chair

About Us

Values and Key Achievements

The number of enquiries has increased over the past five years, from around 10,000 to just fewer than 30,000 per annum. The largest category of enquiries has alternated between Welfare Benefits and Debt Advice.

The demand for our services is high, and we continually aspire to provide innovative solutions to people's problems. We also use our research and campaigns to address unfairness in policy and practices and seek system changes using an evidence-based approach.

Darlington, Redcar, and Cleveland Citizens Advice began as two separate charities and merged in 2021 following a long period of collaborative governance, shared management, and shared back office. This resulted in more sustainable services, back-office savings and increased opportunities for our staff and volunteers.

Our teams have received recognition for their work in the last 12 months, with one of our volunteers winning the Best of Darlington's Volunteer of the Year award after years of service and helping people realise their rights and entitlements.

Our BEAT and Community Care and Crisis team were shortlisted for a national Citizens Advice award, and our CEO was shortlisted for the North East Charity Leader of the Year award.

About Us

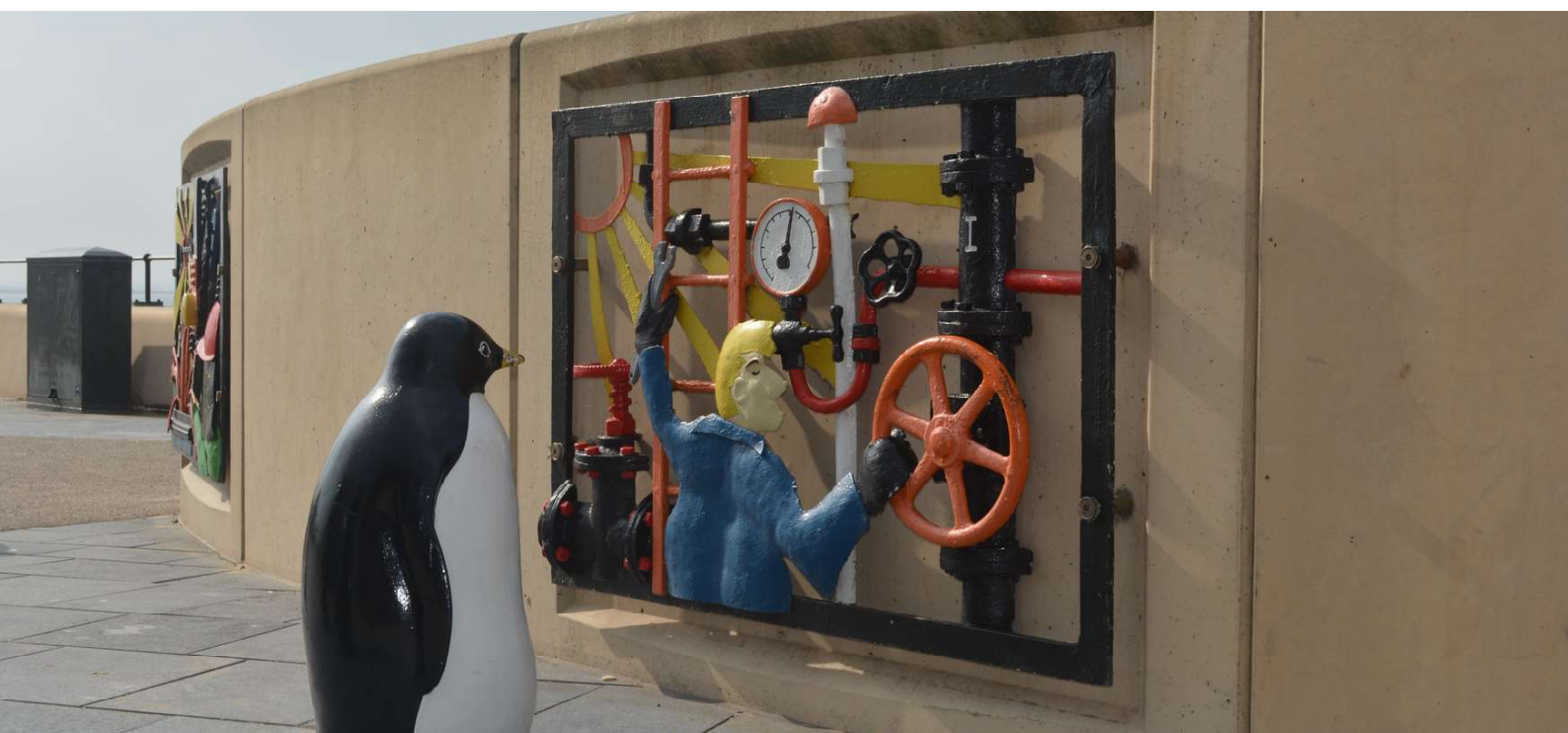
Goals for the Future

We aim to continue increasing our beneficiaries' opportunities to improve their lives, including supporting people in quality paid work and volunteering opportunities.

We will build on our extensive partnerships, and we recognise that partnering with a diverse range of organisations and stakeholders means we can achieve more.

We work closely with Citizens Advice in Hartlepool to further the prospects of our coastal communities and recognise the unique challenges and opportunities this brings.

We will remain a responsive learning organisation relevant to people's changing lives and needs. 2025 will see us review our 3-year strategic plan, taking us forward into the coming years.



Testimonials from a Board Member

Why did you become a trustee at DRC Barbara?

Firstly, I wanted to use and develop the skills and knowledge I had developed as a teacher and subsequent voluntary work in the local area. I wanted to contribute positively to the people of Darlington and Redcar –to the people and families who have perhaps not had the chances and luck I have experienced.

I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting and working with great staff and volunteers whose commitment and enthusiasm are inspiring. They are dedicated to supporting and improving the lives of so many vulnerable people. As a trustee, I enjoy enabling them to carry out their roles and hearing of their success.

I have always enjoyed being part of a team, and our trustee board is an excellent team of people from many different backgrounds. It has been an enormous learning experience for me as I had no experience in the voluntary sector when I joined the board.

I am constantly learning new things, which gives me a sense of satisfaction and a sense of achievement – even though sometimes it takes me out of my comfort zone.

I have lived in the North East since I was 18, but I feel much more connected to the area now and have a much better understanding of the people and their needs at difficult times in their lives.

Job Description

Citizens Advice Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland

Trustees x3

(Marketing, Social Media OR IT background preferred)

Darlington Redcar and Cleveland

The length of term is 3 years; attend two to three meetings per quarter plus an annual strategy away day and working groups as and when required.

Citizens Advice Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland is a member of the national umbrella body Citizens Advice; however, it works fully as an independent local charity run by local people to benefit local people.

We aim to provide the advice people need to solve their problems and improve the policies and practices that affect their lives.

The number of enquiries has increased over the past five years, from around 10,000 to just fewer than 30,000 per annum. The largest category of enquiries has alternated between Welfare Benefits and Debt Advice.

Providing specialist advice in complex cases and offering outreach services requires Citizens Advice Darlington, Redcar, and Cleveland to employ over 24 staff and a dedicated volunteer workforce of over 66 individuals to support our local communities.

We are committed to our main purpose of providing free, independent, confidential, and impartial advice to everyone on their rights and responsibilities.

Job Description

We hugely value diversity, promote equality, and challenge discrimination.

We're therefore excited to be seeking three Trustees to join our compassionate, driven, and purpose-focused Trustee team and support us on the next stage of our journey.

Specific areas you would be involved in include –

- Working closely with the CEO to provide inspirational and strategic leadership within our organisation to ensure it is thriving, developing, and learning and it is effectively managed for the benefit of its users
- Working on specialist projects with other trustees or staff to further the strategic objectives of Citizens Advice Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland
- Taking an active part in discussions during board meetings and working with other trustees to set policy and strategy direction, set targets and evaluate performance, including action for improvement
- Working with other trustees to monitor the financial position of Citizens Advice Darlington, Redcar and Cleveland, ensuring that it operates within its means and objectives, that all supporting financial control systems are in order, money is only spent for the purpose given, proper financial controls are in place to safeguard the organisation's resources, and there are clear lines of accountability for day-to-day financial management

Job Description

- Seeking the views of all sections of the community and monitoring how well the service meets the needs of the local community
- Ensuring that the service plans for the recruitment and turnover of staff and volunteers is proactive and needs-based

Person specification

Ideally, we are interested in individuals with skills and experience in marketing, social media, or IT; however, we would also welcome applications from those with specialisms in other areas.

If possible, applicants will have a connection to the Darlington, Redcar, or Cleveland area and an understanding of the communities we serve.

Skills which would be highly beneficial include –

- Being non-judgmental and respectful of others' views, values and cultures
- Highly effective listening, verbal and written communication skills
- Being able to exercise sound independent judgement
- Strong numeracy skills to understand accounts with the support of the treasurer
- Commitment and passion for Citizens Advice's aims, principles and policies, including confidentiality and data protection
- Be willing to undertake ongoing training and development in your role.
- No experience is necessary as a fully mentored position is available.

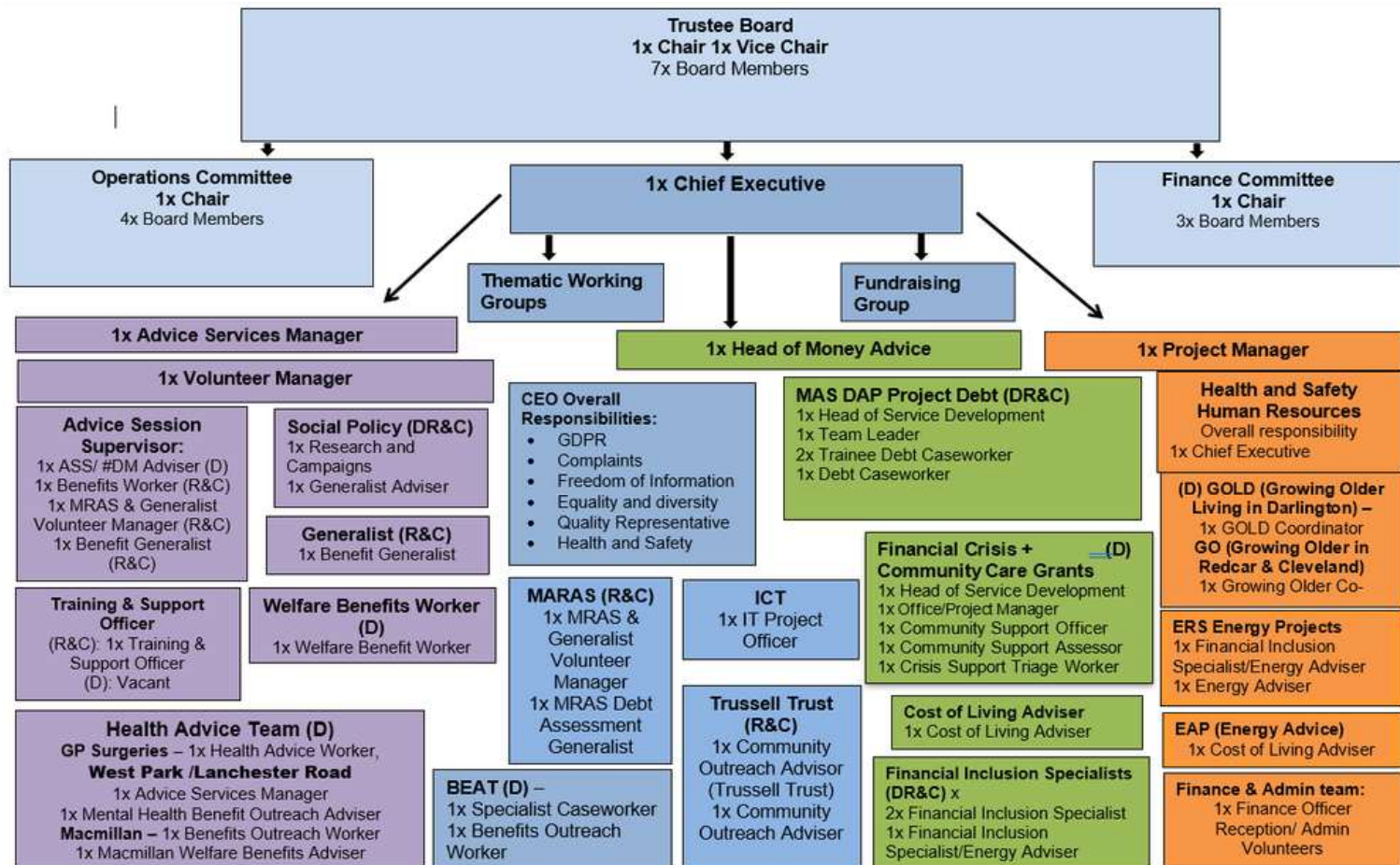
What's in it for you?

- You will make a hugely positive impact on people in your local area by ensuring the local Citizens Advice Darlington, Redcar, and Cleveland is sustainable and meeting the needs of our diverse communities. We cover urban, coastal and rural areas.
- Impact our charity's direction and the support we provide to those who use our services
- You will have the opportunity to meet people and build relationships with trustees, staff and other volunteers
- Build upon your governance, leadership and strategy skills.
- Increase your understanding of the challenges affecting individuals within our local areas.
- Impact our charity's direction and the support we provide to those who use our services
- Have your say and be heard on something that matters!

... And we'll reimburse your expenses, too.



Organisation & Governance Structure Charts



Case Study for a User of our Services

'Rachel' is 30 years old and first approached us for advice when she was homeless after fleeing her previous address for safety reasons. Rachel is unable to work due to her health issues, including mental health and back issues. She receives Universal Credit with Limited Capability for Work Related activity.

Rachel was sofa surfing and sometimes had to sleep in a tent. She had made a homelessness application, but she was unsure what was happening with her case. We contacted the Homeless Section and supported Rachel to re-engage with their support to find housing.

We explained to Rachel that we could complete a financial statement with her before she moves into a property to check if it will be affordable for her. Rachel wanted to focus on finding a home before addressing her former rent arrears. We discussed that while she has no household bills to pay she could try to reduce the debt so she is in a better position when she secures accommodation.

We completed a benefits check and provided budgeting advice to help Rachel keep her bills affordable when she moves into a new tenancy. Rachel was advised that she would be able to claim Council Tax Support and help with her Housing costs through Universal Credit. We advised her on potential grants we could help her apply for to help her furnish the home.

Rachel has now secured a housing association rented property with her partner and has her child and her partner's child staying 2-3 nights per week.

Case Study for a User of our Services

They had few home items, although they had secured a fridge freezer from the social fund. Rachel advised they were struggling to top up their gas and electricity and manage their UC claim due to only having one phone and sometimes being unable to top this up.

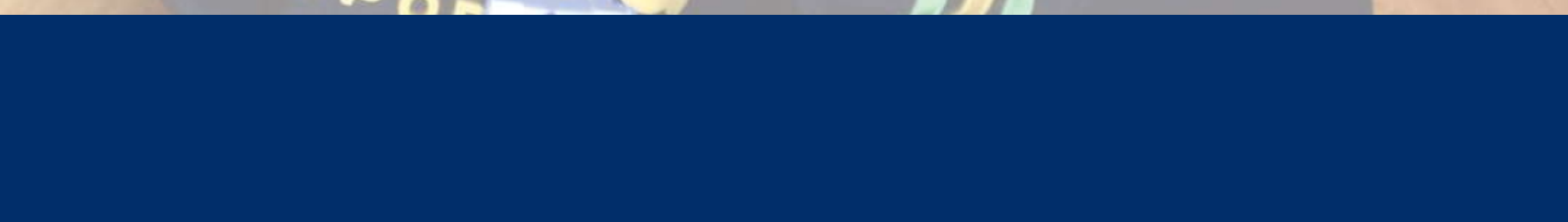
We completed a further benefits check and encouraged Rachel, and her partner to both apply for PIP: once they have the forms, they will contact us for support to complete these.

We awarded Rachel a mobile phone and two Tesco sim cards so they will have data, calls and texts for 6 months and can keep in touch with the DWP, their children and other support services. We successfully applied to Greggs Foundation for a washing machine and Footprints for a starter pack which we took to the Brotton foodbank for them to collect. We also awarded a fuel voucher to help them top up their gas and electric meters.

The property was not carpeted, and Rachel and her partner could not afford flooring. This made the property cold and difficult, especially when the children visited.

We accessed the Glasspool Flexible Frontline Fund, and carpeting of £750 was granted.

The advice provided has enabled Rachel to secure and manage an affordable tenancy and supported her in making the property a safe and secure home for the family.



Interested?

Next steps

For a informal and confidential conversation with CEO Helen Howson contact [**hello@citizensadvisedrc.org.uk**](mailto:hello@citizensadvisedrc.org.uk)

Or apply by sending a cover letter and CV to [**hello@citizensadvisedrc.org.uk**](mailto:hello@citizensadvisedrc.org.uk)

Closing date for applications – **Noon 27 November 2024**

Formal interviews – **3rd and 4th December 2024**

Intended start date – **January 2025**

Further details on our organisation can be found at - [**www.citizensadvisedrc.org.uk**](http://www.citizensadvisedrc.org.uk)