# Recruitment pack

# Caseworker (maternity cover)

Further to your interest in this post, please find:

* Information about our charity and about the post
* Job description
* Person specification
* Privacy notice
* Information for applicants
* Application form
* Link to our equality and diversity in recruitment monitoring form

To apply, please return the application form, taking particular care to provide full details of how you meet the person specification. We would also like you to complete our recruitment monitoring form (available online at <http://bit.ly/2QpnEbn>) as this helps us to review our recruitment processes.

Please send your completed application form (page 15 onwards of this pack) by email, to [lily.harrison@covadvice.org.uk](mailto:lily.harrison@covadvice.org.uk). If this isn’t possible, you can return it by post to:

Recruitment

Coventry Independent Advice Service

Oakwood House, Cheylesmore

Coventry CV1 2HL

Pleas mark the envelope “Confidential”.

If you require further information or need us to make any special arrangements to enable you to participate in the selection process, please contact us on 024 7652 1100.

**Closing date for applications:**  **Thursday 30th September (at 12 noon)**

**Interviews: To be held on either 6th or 7th October 2021 (online via Microsoft Teams).**

Coventry Independent Advice Service Ltd is a registered charity (1015216) and a company limited by guarantee in England and Wales (2761115).

Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (FRN: 628958).

# About Coventry Independent Advice Service

Coventry Independent Advice Service offers free, confidential, community-based advice in Coventry.  We hold the [Advice Quality Standard](http://advicequalitystandard.org.uk/), a nationally recognised quality mark for organisations providing free, independent advice to members of the public. We offer accredited advice and casework on welfare benefits and debt problems, plus general advice and information on other social welfare matters. Where we are unable to help, we will refer or signpost to a more appropriate provider.

Our **vision** is for a city of empowered citizens. By offering high quality advice and information services within the city we will help people to make informed decisions and choices that affect their lives. We do not seek to create a dependency on our service for assistance; instead we strive to empower people to recognise their rights and entitlements, to claim the benefits they need and to help find realistic solutions to financial problems. This will result in wider benefits for the community as reduced financial exclusion has a local ‘multiplier effect’ – increased income tends to be spent locally, thereby boosting the local economy.

Our **mission** is to advance the welfare of Coventry residents, predominantly by providing information, advice and support, thereby reducing inequality and improving quality of life within the city.

We seek to embed our organisational **values** and see them as of fundamental importance to everything we do. Our core values are:

* We are professional and accountable, and we take pride in offering a high-quality service;
* We act with honesty and integrity in everything we do;
* We are both proactive and reactive;
* We are welcoming and accessible; and
* We treat each other, and everyone who uses our services, equally, with respect and dignity.

Our work aims to help to reduce the level of debt within households and increase the financial capabilities of individuals and families within the city. We will also help to increase income levels by identifying and assisting with claims for social security benefits. This will help to tackle poverty within the city with the associated benefits of improving health and wellbeing more generally.

# What we do

Several features underpin our activities and services:

* Our service model is based on delivering advice services where people need them. We reach people ‘where they are’, in their own community, and deliver our services in safe and accessible venues.
* We are a local, independent charity. As such, we can be more responsive to a changing environment and more able to develop new services to meet local need.
* We seek to empower people rather than creating dependency.
* We work closely with the community, attending events, neighbourhood forums and offering talks to groups.
* We recognise and respect diversity while treating all people equally.
* We have developed excellent working relations with our partner agencies, particularly those who host our outreach advice services. We seek to expand our project work and develop partnerships and links with other local services and community initiatives.
* We recognise the limits of our intervention by referring or sign-posting people to the most appropriate service provider.

## Advice, information and support

Our advice focuses on welfare benefits and debt. We hold the Advice Quality Standard for advice and casework in these areas of law. We can offer general advice and information, and signpost or refer to other agencies, on other social welfare matters.

## Policy and campaigning

In addition to our direct advice function, we also recognise the immense value of working to influence policy direction locally and to feed into discussions about national policy.

Highlighting the impact on our clients of changes in the law, or on administrative procedures, is an important role of any advice service and can help to lessen the harm or distress that might otherwise result.

We take an active role in social policy initiatives across the city that help collate data and evidence impact. We report quarterly on outputs and outcomes to Coventry City Council and take part in local forums to share our learning more widely and exercise a responsible influence on local policy development. We also link with national organisations, including the Institute of Money Advisers and the National Association of Welfare Rights Advisers, to share good practise and learning.

## Why should I join Coventry Independent Advice Service?

* A competitive salary, 25 days paid holiday (on top of public holidays), 4 additional service days over Christmas/New Year and 5% employer pension contributions.
* Hybrid-working, with options to work from home when not undertaking tasks that require face to face engagement.
* We work as a team and encourage everyone to share ideas and to continue learning, giving you the opportunity to develop personally and professionally in a supportive environment.
* A friendly, open plan, workplace within a building shared with two other local client-focused charities.
* We use AdvicePro and Office365 to enable remote working and are keen to further develop the use of technology to support our service.
* You can be part of our success! Last year, we helped local people to secure over £2.75 million in benefits. As well as the direct impact on individuals and families, we estimate our activity is worth over £6 million to the city each year as our clients mainly spend this money locally.

# Job description and person specification

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Job Title:** | Caseworker (maternity cover) |
| **Reports to:** | Advice Manager |
| **Hours:** | Full-time (37 hours per week)  (NB: Part-time applications, for a minimum 4 days per week, will be considered for this post – please make it clear on your application form if you are applying on this basis.) |
| **Holiday:** | 25 days paid holiday, 4 additional service days over Christmas/New Year and all statutory/public holidays in England. |
| **Salary:** | £22,631 to £25,943 (depending on skills and experience) plus 5% employer contribution to NEST pension scheme. |
| **Contract:** | Fixed term maternity cover to 31/12/2022 |
| **Location:** | Oakwood House, Coventry with regular outreach working from community venues across the city. |

## Main purpose of job:

To be part of our team providing welfare benefits and debt advice, casework and support to individuals and families, resolving benefit issues and maximising income.

To provide high quality advice and information within the aims, policies and principles of Coventry Independent Advice Service and working to Advice Quality Standard (AQS) requirements.

## Tasks and responsibilities:

* To provide a high-quality advice service, predominantly on social security and debt advice matters, to individuals and families. **(NB: We expect you will have experience of either welfare benefits advice OR debt advice. Appropriate training will be available to help you achieve the required standard for this role in one or other of these subject areas.)**
* To undertake appropriate casework on social security and debt advice matters.
* To deliver this service through a mix of telephone/digital means and face-to-face advice at community venues across Coventry..
* To work with other local organisations to ensure individuals and families understand their entitlements and establish claims to the benefits and tax credits they are entitled to.
* To maintain confidential case records and administrative systems in accordance with our policies and procedures.
* To design, prepare and deliver talks and information sessions as required.
* To work alongside, and assist with the development, of any volunteers assisting with our advice services.
* To ensure evaluation information is gathered from activity and fed back to funders as required.
* To represent Coventry Independent Advice Service at appropriate meetings and conferences with staff from local organisations, voluntary sector colleagues, council staff and others.
* To keep up to date with trends and changes in social security policy and in the debt advice field.
* To take responsibility for your own professional development, identifying training needs and other learning opportunities.
* To take an active role in team meetings, supervision and appraisal and to contribute and assist in initiatives to improve services to our clients.
* To contribute to the social policy and campaigning work of Coventry Independent Advice Service and Advice Services Coventry.
* To comply with all our policies and standard practice, with specific attention to diversity and equality, confidentiality and safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults.
* To take on any other reasonable tasks which contribute to achievement of the job purpose and the aims of Coventry Independent Advice Service.

# Person Specification

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Experience | |
| Essential | **Desirable** |
| 1. Significant experience of client focused social welfare advice and information work (can be paid or unpaid) in a generalist or specialist advice setting |  |
| 2 (a) Experience of welfare benefits casework including working from legislation and caselaw  OR  2 (b) Experience of debt casework | We expect you will have casework experience in one or other of these subject areas and, desirably, some experience of both. |
| 3. Experience of managing a client caseload |  |
| 4. Experience of networking (developing, maintaining and making use of contacts across a range of professions and organisations) | Experience of community engagement and/or working with volunteers |
| Skills/abilities/knowledge | |
| Essential | **Desirable** |
| 5. Up to date knowledge of legislation, caselaw and procedures relevant to welfare benefits and/or debt advice. |  |
| 6. Excellent written and oral communication skills with ability to adapt these to influence and inform different audiences | Experience of developing and delivering information sessions, seminars or informal training events for a range of audiences |
| 7. Ability to identify social policy issues arising from provision of advice services |  |
| 8. Ability to use IT systems to record and utilise monitoring, casework or other relevant data | Experience of using AdvicePro software  Ability to set up systems to record, utilise and analyse relevant data |
| 9. Ability to work in partnership with other organisations to achieve shared goals |  |
| 10. Ability to prioritise and manage a demanding and varied workload |  |
| 11. Ability to work independently and as part of a team |  |
| Other qualities/behaviours | |
| Essential | **Desirable** |
| 12. Commitment to the aims and objectives of Coventry Independent Advice Service |  |
| 13. A ‘can-do’ attitude and commitment to ensuring our service meets the needs of current and potential users |  |
| Other contractual requirements | |
| 14. Ability to travel within Coventry, using own transport or public transport, as appropriate |  |
| 15. Occasional evening or weekend working |  |
| 16. Required to undertake an enhanced DBS assessment |  |

# A drawing of a face Description automatically generatedJob Applicant Privacy Notice

As part of any recruitment process, Coventry Independent Advice Service (CIAS) collects and processes personal data relating to job applicants. We are committed to being transparent about how we collect and use that data and to meeting our data protection obligations.

**What information do we collect?**

CIAS collects a range of information about you. This includes:

* your name, address and contact details, including email address and telephone number;
* details of your qualifications, skills, experience and employment history;
* information about your current level of remuneration;
* whether or not you have a disability for which we need to make reasonable adjustments during the recruitment process; and
* information about your entitlement to work in the UK.

CIAS may collect this information in a variety of ways. For example, data might be contained in application forms, CVs or resumes, obtained from your passport or other identity documents, or collected through interviews or other forms of assessment.

We may also collect personal data about you from third parties, such as references supplied by former employers and from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). We will only seek information from third parties if a job offer has been made and will inform you that we are doing so.

Data will be stored in a range of different places, including on your application record, in our personnel records and on other IT systems (including email).

**Why does CIAS process personal data?**

We need to process data to take steps at your request prior to entering into a contract with you. We may also need to process your data to enter into a contract with you.

In some cases, we need to process data to ensure that we are complying with our legal obligations. For example, it is mandatory to check a successful applicant's eligibility to work in the UK before employment starts.

CIAS has a legitimate interest in processing personal data during the recruitment process and for keeping records of the process. Processing data from job applicants allows us to manage the recruitment process, assess and confirm a candidate's suitability for employment and decide who to offer a job. We may also need to process data from job applicants to respond to and defend against legal claims.

CIAS may process special categories of data, such as information about ethnic origin, sexual orientation or religion or belief, to monitor recruitment statistics. We may also collect information about whether applicants are disabled to make reasonable adjustments for candidates who have a disability. We process such information in line with our equality and diversity policy and to exercise specific rights in relation to employment.

If your application is unsuccessful, CIAS may keep your personal data on file in case there are future employment opportunities for which you may be suited. This data will be held for a maximum of six months. We will ask for your consent before we keep your data for this purpose, and you are free to withdraw your consent at any time.

**Who has access to data?**

Your information may be shared internally for the purposes of the recruitment exercise. This includes members of the recruitment team, interviewers involved in the recruitment process and managers within the charity and administrative staff/volunteers if access to the data is necessary for the performance of their roles.

We will not share your data with third parties unless your application for employment is successful and we make you an offer of employment. We will then share your data with former employers to obtain references for you and with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) to obtain necessary background checks if appropriate to the role.

**How does CIAS protect data?**

We take the security of your data seriously. We have internal policies and controls in place to ensure that your data is not lost, accidentally destroyed, misused or disclosed, and is not accessed except by our employees and volunteers in the proper performance of their duties.

**How long does CIAS keep my data?**

If your application for employment is unsuccessful, the organisation will hold your data on file for six months after the end of the relevant recruitment process. If you agree to allow us to keep your personal data on file, we will hold your data on file for a further six months for consideration if other employment opportunities become available. At the end of that period, or once you withdraw your consent, your data is deleted or destroyed.

If your application for employment is successful, personal data gathered during the recruitment process will be transferred to your personnel file and retained electronically during your employment. The periods for which your data will be held will be provided to you in a new privacy notice.

**Your rights**

As a data subject, you have several rights. You can:

* access and obtain a copy of your data on request;
* require us to change incorrect or incomplete data;
* require us to delete or stop processing your data, for example where the data is no longer necessary for the purposes of processing; and
* object to the processing of your data where we are relying on our legitimate interests as the legal ground for processing.

If you would like to exercise any of these rights, please contact Alan Markey, Director of Service, at [alan.markey@covadvice.org.uk](mailto:alan.markey@covadvice.org.uk)

If you believe that CIAS has not complied with your data protection rights, you can complain to the Information Commissioner ([www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk)).

**What if you do not provide personal data?**

You are under no statutory or contractual obligation to provide data to CIAS during the recruitment process. However, if you do not provide the information, we may not be able to process your application properly or at all.

# Advice for job applicants

## Completing your application form

The application form is your first opportunity to demonstrate how you meet the requirements for the position you are applying for. It is important that you refer to the advert and all related information when completing your application form, to remind you what the role is and what skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours are required. This will increase your chances of being invited to the next stage of the selection process.

We will only use the information provided in the application form to identify candidates to invite to the next stage of the selection process. We will not make any assumptions about a candidate’s abilities, skills, experience, knowledge or qualifications, so it is very important that the application form gives us the information we need to demonstrate your suitability for the role.

This guidance will help you fill in your application form effectively.

**We ask that all our applications are completed electronically and emailed to us**. If this is not possible, we will accept applications by post. **Please only return the application form, not the whole of this application pack.**

We are committed to increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities and will respond positively to meet individual needs throughout the recruitment process. Our application form asks if you have a disability and will interview all applicants with disabilities who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy.

We will consider applications from part time or job share applicants on their merits and consider them based on business need.

Deadlines for applications will be advertised for each vacancy. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

## Employment History

Tell us about your employment history over the last 10 years (or less if applicable), including details of any gaps. The work you tell us about can be paid, unpaid or voluntary work, so please do not forget to include this as it can also demonstrate valuable experience and skills.

It is important that you tell us about the main aspects of the job(s) and what your responsibilities were. This will help us assess your level of experience for the position you have applied for.

## Supporting Statement

Your supporting statement is your opportunity to provide detail around the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours you have for the position you have applied for. It is an important part of the criteria used to short-list candidates for interview or the next stage of the recruitment process, so make sure you keep the information relevant and concise.

We ask you to keep within a word limit of 1500 words so please ensure you cover all the relevant knowledge, skills, experience and behaviours in your statement.

Within your supporting statement we are looking for you to clearly demonstrate how you meet the requirements of the role as described in the job advert and role profile.

The role profile will give a broad picture of the accountabilities/behaviours required of someone doing the role, and the job advert will give more detail on the specific requirements. It is important you look at both when thinking about your supporting statement.

Providing examples of your experiences to demonstrate your capability in the different areas will help us to assess your suitability for the job. When shortlisting we will be looking at how well you match the job advert and role profile.

Also, consider the behaviours framework. It is useful to consider the type of behaviours expected and where possible to provide evidence of how you have demonstrated these types of behaviours within your examples.

For example, if excellent customer service is a requirement, ensure you give a specific example of when and how you have provided excellent customer service and what the outcome was. Make sure your answers reflect the level of seniority required by the role you are applying for.

A good supporting statement will give specific examples of how you have used the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours required for the role, and evidence of what has changed or improved because of what you have done. If you state that you have the required skills/ experience/ knowledge/behaviours without giving examples, you are unlikely to make it to the next stage of the recruitment process.

## Things to remember

* If your answers are badly written, the content will be irrelevant.
* Ensure you demonstrate the skills, knowledge, experience and behaviours required for the role you are applying for.
* Ensure your answers reflect the level of seniority required by the role you are applying for.
* Don’t be tempted to over inflate your answers. You will be asked to explain your answers further during the interview.

## Testing

For some roles, we also ask you to undertake a test or prepare a piece of work for us to further assess skills necessary for the role. If this is a requirement, further details will be provided should you progress to this stage of the application process.

## Tips for a good interview

Remember most people get nervous about job interviews, but by approaching them in the right way you can make sure you give the right impression.

One of the most common reasons why interviews don’t go well is lack of preparation. It is important that you find out as much as possible about the role and the organisation before your interview. A lot of information will be contained in the job advert and role profile, and you can find out more about us by visiting our website at [www.covadvice.org.uk](http://www.covadvice.org.uk)

If the advert provides details of someone you can contact for further information about the role, it is a good idea to do this. Use all the information available to you to help prepare examples for your interview of why you’re a suitable candidate.

You will be asked questions relating to the key requirements of the role, so think about how your current skills and experience demonstrate you can do the job. Be prepared to give examples highlighting your personal contribution. It is a good idea, where possible, to have some additional examples to those you have provided in your supporting statement.

The acronym STAR may help you to prepare your answers. It is a good technique which can help you structure your response and provide the information we are looking for.

* Situation – Around 20% of your answer should be used to set the scene. What was happening?
* Task – 10% should explain the task either set by yourself or another.
* Action – This is the most important part: 50% of your answer should describe what you did and the skills you used to do it.
* Result – Use the last 20% to give details of the outcome. Consider what impact your behaviour had on the result - Perhaps you learnt something about yourself or it altered your thinking.

Try not to leave your planning to the last minute. Travelling to your interview can be stressful so, if possible, it can be useful to do a trial run before the day of your interview so you know exactly how long it takes you to get there and can plan accordingly. Remember the job interview is also your way of you deciding if you would like the job, so go in with an open mind and ask any questions you may have to help you understand more about the role and the organisation.

During the interview, the panel will be assessing:

* Knowledge: the understanding of and familiarity with a subject, field or specialism.
* Skills: the ability or proficiency to do something, which can include technical and interpersonal skills and qualifications.
* Experience: practical involvement in activities, fields or specialisms built up over a period.
* Behaviour: how a person goes about delivering outputs and the approaches they have used.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Do | Don’t |
| Find out as much about the role as you can before your interview | Attend an interview without proper preparation |
| Think about what value you can add to the organisation/ role | React to questions by saying the first thing that comes into your head |
| Listen to the question and respond to what is being asked | Be too modest about your success |
| Think before you answer | Give a negative impression about your abilities |
| Tell the interviewers about your achievements and skills |  |
| Be positive about your abilities |  |
| Highlight your strengths |  |

## Feedback

Following your interview, you may wish to request feedback. If so, please contact us on 024 7652 1100 or email [info@covadvice.org.uk](mailto:info@covadvice.org.uk). We will give feedback to all candidates who attended for interview, but we regret that we cannot commit to giving feedback to candidates who were not shortlisted.

# Application Form

Please complete (word process, type or write) this form in black ink, to enable clear photocopying. PLEASE DO NOT SEND A CV. This first page will be detached from your application prior to shortlisting to ensure anonymity.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Job Title: | Caseworker (maternity cover) | Closing Date: | **Thursday 30th** September 2021 (at 12 noon) |

Personal Details

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Full Name: |  | | | | | |
| Address: |  | | | | | |
|  | | | | Postcode: |  | |
| Telephone Numbers: | | Daytime: | Evening: | | Mobile: | |
|  |  | |  | |
| NI Number: | |  | Email: |  | | |
| Do you have the legal right to work in the UK?  If you need more information, you can check whether you have the right to work on the [UK government website](https://www.gov.uk/legal-right-work-uk). | | | | | | Yes / No |
| Are you happy to receive correspondence to your e-mail address? | | | | | | Yes / No |

Disability

We are committed to increasing employment opportunities for people with disabilities and guarantee to interview all applicants with disabilities who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Do you have a disability as defined under the Equality Act (defined as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on your ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities)? | Yes/No |
| Please provide details of any special arrangements you would require if invited to interview: | |

Current or most recent employment

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Job Title | Full/Part Time | | Salary | Start Date: |
| Reasons for leaving: | | | | Finish Date: |
| Employer name: | | Address of employer including postcode: | | |
| Notice period required: | |

Please summarise your main duties, responsibilities and key achievements in current or most recent post (in less than 200 words)

|  |
| --- |
|  |

Previous Employment

Tell us about your employment history (paid and unpaid) over the last 10 years (or less if applicable), including any gaps. Please be concise.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| From | To | Employer, job title  and final salary | Main duties  and achievements |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
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|  |  |  |  |

Education and Qualifications

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| From | To | School/ University | Subjects taken | Level/Grade |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

Other relevant training or learning undertaken

Please give details of relevant short training courses or other learning you have undertaken (academic or vocational):

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Course title/content | Provided by | Duration | Dates |
| **i** |  |  |  |

Supporting Information

Within your supporting statement we are looking for you to clearly demonstrate how you meet the person specification for the job. **Please address each of the essential criteria in the person specification, giving examples to show how you meet each requirement along with any of the desirable criteria. Please be concise.** You may add more pages but please limit your statement to no more than 1500 words.

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|  |

Referees

Please give the names and addresses of two persons to whom reference can be made. ‘Referee 1’ should be your present/most recent employer or, if this is not possible, someone who has supervised you in an academic context or in a voluntary role. No approach will be made to your current employer before an offer of employment is made.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Referee 1** | **Referee 2** |
| Name:  Position:  Address & postcode:  i  Tel No:  Email:  What is your connection with this referee? | Name:  Position:  Address & postcode:  Tel No:  Email:  What is your connection with this referee? |

Declaration

* I declare that all the information on this application form and any other documents relating to this appointment is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, true and correct. I understand that any false statement may give cause for dismissal should I be employed.
* I consent to Coventry Independent Advice Service processing the information given on this form, including 'sensitive' information, as may be necessary during the recruitment and selection process. I understand that if my application is unsuccessful this application may be held on file for a maximum of 9 months. I understand that if I have sent this application form via e-mail it will automatically be deemed that I have signed the declaration below.

## Equality and diversity monitoring:

Please complete our equality and diversity monitoring form **online** at <http://bit.ly/2QpnEbn>. Please tick this box to confirm that you have completed the monitoring form. **□**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Signed:** |  | **Date:** |  |

Please return this application form to [lily.harrison@covadvice.org.uk](mailto:lily.harrison@covadvice.org.uk) (you should retain a copy and the rest of this pack for your reference).

Thank you for your interest in this post. Please note that if you have not heard from us more than three weeks after the closing date, please assume your application has been unsuccessful.