

Chair

Job pack

Thank you for your interest in working with Citizens Advice East Berkshire. This job pack should give you everything you need to know to apply for this role and what it means to work with Citizens Advice.

In this pack you'll find:

- Letter from the Chair of Trustees
- Our values
- Things you should know about us
- Overview of Citizens Advice and Citizens East Berkshire and its governance
- The role profile and personal specification
- How to apply

Want to chat about this role?

If you want to chat about the role further, you can contact the outgoing chair Cheryl Coppel by emailing Cheryl.c@caeb.org.uk to arrange a call.

**We are
Citizens Advice**

**We are
the people's
champion**

Dear Applicant

Thank you for your interest in becoming our new Chair.

This is a great opportunity to lead in developing and shaping the Citizens Advice services for over 400,000 residents who live in the boroughs of Bracknell Forest, Slough and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. Population needs vary across the areas we serve, and we are there for everyone, though most of our advice is to those struggling with poverty, debt, housing and benefits issues.

We are often the only place left locally that people can seek free, independent, confidential and impartial advice on social welfare. We are there to help people get their lives back on track. Our staff and volunteers are passionate about what they do because they know they can make a real difference to people's lives.

In the current economic climate many people are coming to us for the first time with debt, housing and benefit issues. We want to grow to be able to meet more of that demand. We are also proud to be able to assist those who need us most. We have contracts focused on assisting clients with significant mental health challenges and contracts that link us directly with local Foodbanks.

It has been a great privilege to be the chair of CAEB for over 4 years and the chair of one of its predecessor organisations, Maidenhead and Windsor Citizens Advice for 3 years prior to Citizens Advice East Berkshire forming. As I step down CAEB is looking for a strong chair to continue to help it to grow and thrive. We have a great team of staff and volunteers committed and dedicated to taking our services forward.

We would love you to join us to help deliver our vision of a sustainable and growing charity reaching out into our communities and being able to be there for people when they need us most.

Best wishes,

Cheryl Coppel

Our mission and values

Our mission is to provide trusted advice at times of change

Provide advice fit for the future - be there for people when they need us in the ways that help make the biggest impact.

Close the gap - end the disparities in access and experience for marginalised people.

Take early action – prevent more people reaching crisis by addressing problems early.

Our Values

- **Empowering** - we are proud to help clients to understand and exercise their rights and responsibilities.
- **To provide the best advice** – we provide, consistent, high quality, independent advice.
- **Inclusive and flexible** – we adapt to the changing needs of our clients and society, promoting access to those in greatest need whilst challenging discrimination.
- **Open** - we are impartial, non-judgmental, act with integrity and learn from feedback.
- **One team** – of staff and volunteers working together and developing our services with our clients at the forefront of our minds.



How Citizens Advice works

The Citizens Advice service is made up of Citizens Advice - the national charity - and a network of around 240 local Citizens Advice members that are independent charities.

This role sits within this network of independent charities, delivering services from



over 1,600 locations
across England & Wales



8843 staff



14,000 trained
volunteers

84% of people using our local services would recommend us to a friend.

No one else sees so many people with so many different kinds of problems, and that gives us a unique insight into the challenges people are facing today.

Citizens Advice East Berkshire

Serves a population of 435,000 residents living in the areas of:

- Bracknell Forest
- Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
- Slough

We have offices or outreach services across East Berkshire and deliver our service through

- Phone
- Drop in
- Outreach and referral

[Read our annual report for 2023/24 here.](#) Some headlines about our service are set out on the next page.



Key Headlines for 2024 /25

Citizens Advice East Berkshire



Our income was £804,164



We have 25 staff and 60 volunteers



We helped 6,634 people



With 40,364 issues



We gained £8,282,901 back for clients through assisting them to gain their rightful benefits and helping them write off debts.



Most of the people we advised had problems with benefits, debt and housing issues.



Our clients are very diverse and many of the people we advise have disabilities or long-term health challenges.

The role

About the role

Role of the Chair:

- Chair the periodic Board meetings. (at least 4 times a year, there may, from time to time, be other informal or formal meetings of the Board.)
- Management / Oversight of the CEO.
- Set direction/delegation for Sub-Committee Chairs/annual cycle of review etc.
- Overarching governance of the CAEB.
- Ensure an appropriate mix of skills among trustees.
- Conduct skills audit as necessary.
- Responsible for Committee/Lead Trustee pipeline

We have recently appointed an experienced Chief Executive and it will be important to establish strong working partnership arrangements with the Chief Executive who is responsible for delivering the executive functions of the charity.

A full job description and person specification is included later in the pack.

Governance Structure

We have embarked on a review of our governance to ensure it is as effective and efficient as possible. This review is likely to be approved by the Board in August.

The review identified an organisation with scarce resources and limited time. The future governance proposal seeks to focus the work of the Board and enable the organisation to spend maximum time on serving its clients and the community, whilst ensuring governance is effective, but not overly bureaucratic.

The proposed structure seeks to avoid duplication of effort and to maximise the value of trustee input. It seeks to agree the clear division of responsibility across committees and retain overarching governance at Board level.

The scope of the Chair's role was also considered. The review proposes a strategic rather than operational Chair.

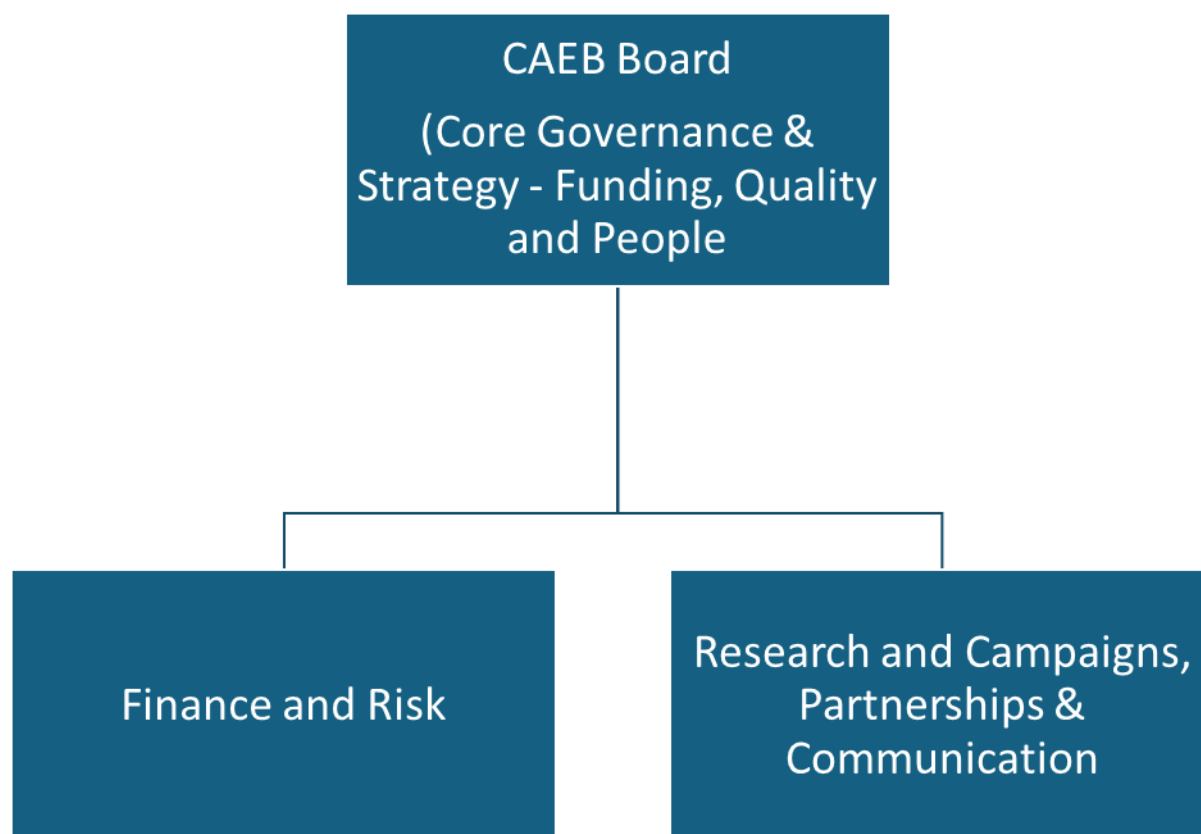
Governance Structure proposed:

Board plus 2 sub-committees (Finance and Risk, and Research and Campaigns, Partnerships & Communication).

The Board delegates responsibility for service delivery, quality and people management to the CEO. The Board retains oversight of these function and is primarily focused on governance of the charity plus over-arching strategy, vision and direction.

Sub-committees each have delegated decision making power for core areas, only bringing escalations / final approvals to the Board.

The core responsibilities (checks and balances) of the Board are executed via the main Board and across the sub-committees. The annual activities / information to review is managed across all three committees, where the Board provides oversight.



The Board remains the key forum for setting direction, ensuring governance of the entire organisation, and over-arching strategic planning for CAEB.

The board delegates relevant governance to the two sub-committees (Finance and Risk, Research and Campaigns, Partnerships & Communication):

- Sub-Committees approve their respective minutes/actions and policies– where they do not need subsequent Board approval.
- Where issues need to be escalated – these committees will bring matters to the Board / raise with the Board Chair and may refer matters to another committee (e.g. where risks are identified).
- Where performance is on track then reporting upward is not required.
- Board does not duplicate reporting but focuses on wider issues and overarching governance and service quality.
- Each sub-committee Chair is responsible for setting their agenda across the year (in alignment with the Board and Chair).

The Main Board should be a closed forum with separate open sessions with core-funders organised as needed e.g. a funders AGM or routine updates.

Number of meetings per year:

- 4 Main Board Meetings PA.
- Ambition is to move to 2 full Sub-Committee meetings PA with additional engagements as required such as in the instance of a Risk Register requirement / financial reporting / statutory reporting.
- Sub-Committee Chairs will determine the number of full and 'light' meetings needed each year.
- Sub-Committees are coordinated to take place within the quarter before the main Board meetings.

The chair is not expected to also sit on the sub committees.

Board: Terms of Reference:

- Set strategy and direction.
- Provide oversight of policies and strategies to be assured that they are being delivered and agree in year changes primarily via sub committees and ratified at Board as needed.
- Oversee the work of the Chief Executive and ensure compliance with LSA requirements.
- Ensure compliance with governing documents and required standards in respect of the Charity Commission, Companies House and the Financial Services Authority.
- Ensure service plans are delivered according to contract/KPIs/Business plan/DPO
- Ensure annual funding strategy is set as part of business planning
- Ensure satisfactory recruitment/turnover/training and development of staff and volunteers meets required standards and ensure EDI is actively considered.
- Review its own work and how effectively it operates, including action for improvement.

- Work on specific projects to further the strategic objectives of CAEB.
- (Via the Finance and Risk Committee) - monitor the financial position ensuring that CAEB operates within its means and objectives, ensuring that there are clear lines of accountability for day-to-day financial management and risks are regularly assessed.
- (Via the Research and Campaigns, Partnerships and Communication Committee) - seek the views of all sections of the community and monitor how well the service meets the needs of the local communities CAEB serves plus responsibility for monitoring ongoing funding.
- All trustees remain accountable for the financial matters of the charity.

Current Trustees

CAEB currently has 11 trustees. The board is regularly refreshed and currently has a mixture of trustees who have been on the board for some time and relatively new trustees.

Executive Aspirations for 2025

At CAEB, we look to bring together a number of strategic initiatives in 2025 that we've been focussing on during the past year. These are some of the ambitions our new CEO will need to work on:

- Developing a volunteer strategy that reflects how volunteer models are changing in the CA network enabling us to provide advice and support to more clients
- Diversify our funding base through both current and new funding initiatives
- Ensure our operating model is both efficient and consistent, and maximising distribution of existing resources
- Communicate the impact and value of CAEB services across multiple platforms, partners, stakeholders and funders, demonstrating our social value with data and stories

Job description

What will you do?

- Complete an induction for your role
- Maintain an awareness of how the local Citizens Advice is operating
- Plan the board meetings including the dates and the agenda, with the Company / Charity Secretary and the Chief Executive Officer
- Provide support and supervision for the Chief Executive Officer including an annual appraisal
- Read papers for board meetings and attend at least 4 meetings per year
- Facilitate the trustee board meetings by leading the meeting, ensuring that agenda items are discussed, enabling all members to contribute their views and take part and seeking clarification where necessary
- Ensure that decisions and actions taken at board meetings are carried out
- Ensure that the board decisions are made within the remit of the Citizens Advice membership agreement, governing documents and policies
- Monitor attendance and commitment of all trustees
- Provide or arrange for training or support for trustees if needed
- With other trustees and the Chief Executive Officer, recruit a trustee board with a diverse range of skills, experience and knowledge with an aim to promote trusteeship to underrepresented groups that represent the local community
- Ensure that all trustees receive an induction and complete the training needed for them to fulfil their role
- Be proactive in planning succession and recruiting successors to key positions such as Chair, Treasurer etc.
- Together with the Treasurer, ensure proper management and control of local Citizens Advice finances
- Together with the Chief Executive Officer, represent the local Citizens Advice in relationships with funders or potential funders, local events and in the community
- Work together with all trustees and ensure that the board is able to:
 - set policy and strategy direction taking into account the Citizens Advice membership agreement, set targets and evaluate the performance of the local Citizens Advice
 - monitor the financial position of the local Citizens Advice ensuring that it operates within its means and objectives, ensuring clear lines of accountability for day to day financial management
 - monitor whether the Citizens Advice service complies with its governing document and meets the required standards

- seek the views of all sections of the community and monitor how well the service meets the needs of the local community
- ensure that the service plans for the recruitment and turnover of staff and volunteers
- review its own work and how effectively it operates including action for improvement
- work on specific projects to further the strategic objectives of the local Citizens Advice and the network as a whole

What's in it for you?

- Use your experience to make a positive impact for people in your local area by ensuring the local Citizens Advice is sustainable and meeting the needs of the community
- Meet people and build relationships with trustees, staff and other volunteers
- Build on your governance, leadership and strategy knowledge and skills
- Increase your employability

What do you need to have?

You'll need to:

- Understand the type of work undertaken by a local Citizens Advice and the Citizens Advice network
- Understand and accept the responsibilities and liabilities of a trustee
- Be non-judgmental and respect views, values and cultures that are different to your own
- Have a good basis of leadership skills (and preferably you have served within a Board, ideally as Chair or Vice Chair or led a Committee)
- Have the ability to facilitate and lead meetings
- Have good interpersonal skills
- Have good listening, verbal and written communication skills
- Be able to exercise good independent judgment
- Have good numeracy skills to understand accounts with the support of the treasurer
- Be willing to learn about and follow the Citizens Advice aims, principles and policies, including confidentiality and data protection
- Be willing to undertake mandatory training in your role
- Line manage and support the Chief Executive Officer

How much time do you need to give?

Trustee boards usually meet in the evenings and you'll likely need to give 8 – 12 hours a month and you may need to attend other meetings if you're involved in specific projects, or meet with volunteers and staff occasionally within the local Citizens Advice. We can be flexible about the time spent, so come and talk to us.

If you are interested in becoming a chair of trustees and would like to discuss flexibility around location, time, 'what you will do' and how we can support you please contact us.

How to apply

To apply for the role of Chair at CAEB, please send us your CV and a maximum 2 page supporting statement. The supporting statement should demonstrate how you meet the criteria outlined in the person specification and outline why you are interested in becoming the Chair of Citizens Advice East Berkshire.

All applications must be sent to the Chair of Trustees, Cheryl Coppel by emailing cheryl.c@caeb.org.uk.

As noted previously, applicants can request a conversation with Cheryl prior to deciding whether to apply by emailing her on the above address.

Recruitment will continue until we find our preferred candidate and applications will be reviewed on receipt. (There is no closing date applicable to this advert and it will be withdrawn when sufficient suitably qualified candidates have been received)

Recruitment process

Stage 1: Applications will be reviewed on receipt on a rolling basis. Selected candidates will be contacted with details (dates/times/locations) for stage 2 of the process. Telephone screening may be completed.

Stage 2: Successful Stage 1 candidates will be assessed by two interviews. One with a small selection panel of trustees and the second with a meeting of the whole Board. Candidates will also have an opportunity to meet with the Chief Executive, Nicola Miller and with some staff and volunteers.

Diversity, Equality and Inclusion

Citizens Advice East Berkshire are equal opportunities employers. We value diversity and welcome applications from all sections of the community. Applications from people in underrepresented groups with protected characteristics are encouraged. We are

dedicated to encouraging a supportive and inclusive culture amongst the whole workforce. It is within our best interest to promote diversity and eliminate discrimination in the workplace. When we select candidates for employment, promotion, training, or any other benefit, it will be on the basis of their aptitude and ability. We ask individuals to complete a monitoring form to help us monitor the diversity of applicants. It will be separated from your application and will not be seen by anyone involved in recruitment to this position.