# Candidate Guide

## Citizens Advice Mid Mercia

citizens advice Mid Mercia

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# Contents


Introduction ..... 3

Our CORE values ..... 3

3 things you should know about us ..... 4

Opportunities to Progress ..... 4

Applying for our roles ..... 4

- Job description & person specification ..... 4
- Our adverts on job boards ..... 4
- Filling out your application ..... 5
- Skills, knowledge, experience and information section of application ..... 5
- Equality Monitoring questions ..... 6
- We are a Disability Confident Employer ..... 6
- Technical issues or special adjustments ..... 6

Shortlisting ..... 6

Interviews ..... 6

- In-person interviews ..... 7
- Microsoft Teams interviews ..... 7
- Accessibility & Reasonable Adjustments ..... 7
- Interviews hints and tips ..... 7

Equal Opportunities ..... 8

Documentation ..... 8

# Introduction

We're delighted you're considering a career here at Citizens Advice Mid Mercia!

CAMM is an inclusive and supportive organisation to work for and if you have a passion for working in the heart of your local community and are driven by making a difference, then we're the organisation for you.

Our people are key to our success as an organisation, so we have set up our recruitment processes to be inclusive and hopefully attracting the widest number of candidates as possible.

This Candidate Guide gives useful information about our recruitment processes, plus hints and tips on how to complete our application form and to make your candidate journey with us a pleasant one.

Plus, if there's anything you think we can do better in future do let us know at **staff@citizensadvicemidmercia.org.uk**

# Our CORE values

At CAMM, we embrace our own organisational CORE values

We not only apply our CORE values to our clients accessing our services, but also to our colleagues so that we support each other to carry out our vital roles.

# 3 things you should know about us

**1. We're local and we're national**. We have 6 national offices and offer direct support to people in around 300 independent local Citizens Advice services across England and Wales.

**2. We're here for everyone.** Our advice helps people solve problems and our advocacy helps fix problems in society. Whatever the problem, we won't turn people away.

**3. We're listened to - and we make a difference.** Our trusted brand and the quality of our research mean we make a real impact on behalf of the people who rely on us.

# Opportunities to Progress

Staff and volunteers are regularly offered further training and professional development. There is a wealth of training available – both in-house and external – as well as access to Citizens Advice National online and e-learning modules and training tools.

There is also a wealth of knowledge in the team and support and guidance is always close by.

We are a dynamic and ever-changing organisation with new services and teams regularly coming on board.

# Applying for our roles

All our roles are advertised on our website - Work with us – CAMMS

Each role will have the essential information like salary, contracted hours and method of applying. For each role we also attach the *job description and person specification*.

**Job description & person specification**

The job description will explain to you the key responsibilities of the role and what skills, experience and/or qualifications you may need. The person specification also shows which criteria are essential.

**Our adverts on job boards**

We also advertise our vacancies on some job boards like **Indeed.com**, **gov.uk Find a Job** and others. Within our advert on a job board you will usually see a summary of the key things you'll do in the role along with the essential criteria we'd need you to bring to the role.

Where roles can be performed part time or hybrid we will indicate this too. There will also be a link to our website where you will be able to find full job description and person specification for a role and information on how to apply.

However, if it doesn't say, or you have questions about the role please get in touch with the hiring manager whose contact details will be provided in the job description or email your question to **staff@citizensadvicemidmercia.org.uk**.

**Filling out your application**

Depending on the type of role you are applying to, you may be able to simply send your CV and cover letter to apply but for the majority of the vacancies there will be a need to fully complete an application form with some specific questions. The correct way to apply will be indicated in the advert.

There are 2 options on how to complete the application form:

- Online application form
- MS Word document application form that can be downloaded from our Vacancies webpage

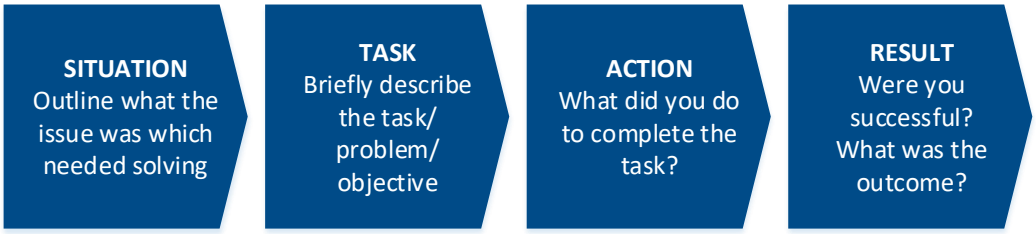
Our recruitment process is transparent and fair, therefore we will not be able to accept CVs as a substitute for the application form and vice versa.

**Skills, knowledge, experience and information section of application**

The application form plays a key part in our recruitment and selection process. Members of the recruitment panel will consider information you provide against the person specification for the role to decide whether you will be shortlisted for an interview.

It's therefore advisable to say in your application (or cover letter if we indicated CV as a way to apply) why you're suitable for the role. Take a look at the Person Specification section of the Job Description and let us know which of those essential criteria you'll bring to the role and anything extra. It's your chance to tell us why you'll make a great addition to our team here at CAMM and for that role.

A great model for showing off your skills and knowledge is to provide example for each Person Specification requirement. Choose examples of past experience that clearly demonstrate what we are looking for. A useful guide might be the **STAR** model as shown below:




Please provide recent work examples wherever possible. However, do remember that relevant examples from other aspects of your life, for example voluntary or unpaid work, school or college work, family or home responsibilities, can also be given.

### Equality Monitoring questions

All our applications forms have some equality monitoring questions at the end. We ask these questions so we can look at the demographic of candidates we are attracting and recruiting to our roles. This helps us understand whether we are reaching a diverse candidate pool, reflective of the communities we serve. This information is for monitoring purposes only. All information will be treated as confidential and will not be used when short-listing or deciding on whether an applicant is suitable for a role.

We'd really appreciate if you would answer these questions and your answers will not be seen by the recruiting manager for the vacancy. However, if you would prefer not to answer any of the questions we ask, please leave them blank.

### We are a Disability Confident Employer

Citizens Advice Mid Mercia is an accredited (Level 1) Disability Confident employer, and values diversity and promotes equality. We encourage and welcome applications from suitably skilled candidates from all backgrounds. We follow the social model of disability which believes that it is the barriers created by society which disable people. We will use reasonable adjustments wherever possible to remove those barriers.

### Technical issues or special adjustments

If you do experience any technical issues whilst trying to complete your application or you need adjustments to be able to apply, please do get in touch with us at **staff@citizensadvicemidmercia.org.uk** and we'll be happy to support you

# Shortlisting

At shortlisting stage, the hiring manager will review all applications against the essential criteria for their role. If a high number of applications are received the

hiring manager may then bring in some of the desirable criteria to be able to come to a suitable short list for the next stage. In some instances, they may request further information from you if it's unclear whether you meet the essential criteria.

# Interviews

As with many organisations we tend to do in-person interviews, but we also use Microsoft Teams virtual interviews too if we don't feel an in-person interview is needed.

### In-person interviews

We'll let you know in your invite where the interview is being held, any local information you might need such as where to park and who to ask for on arrival.

### Microsoft Teams interviews

You'll need MS Teams on your device to be able to join the meeting. You can download MS Teams from your usual App store or via Microsoft on your laptop or PC. You won't need to pay for the app, just use the free version and you'll be able to join as a 'guest' on your interview day.

We'll send the MS Teams invite to the email address you've applied to us with. Then on the day click on the link which says '*click here to join the meeting*'.

Here's a helpful link to a video from Microsoft showing you a walkthrough of how to join teams meetings – Join a Teams Meeting

### Accessibility & Reasonable Adjustments

If you do have any special requirements or need any adjustments to our recruitment process, please do let us know. You'll find the hiring manager contact details for the role you've applied for either in the Job Description and on your email invites to interview so you can get in touch with them in the first instance or, for further support, please email **staff@citizensadvicemidmercia.org.uk**

### Interviews hints and tips

When you attend an interview with us we want to give you the best opportunity to show us your skills and experience so we've put together a few pointers to help you prepare.

- *Where is the interview being held* – if it's in-person, check the route, plan your journey, where will you park. If online, have you got your joining link, are you using a laptop or a phone – is it fully charged?

- *Task, presentation or assessment* – were you asked to prepare a presentation for your interview? Have you been sent an assessment or task to complete? Make sure you check the invite and email to see if there were any other elements to complete or prepare.
- *Things to take with you/have to hand* – were you asked to take documentation? Do you like to ask questions at the interview and perhaps need to take your own notebook? Also having a drink of water to hand can always be good especially as you'll probably be talking a lot!
- *Review the advert, job description & our website* – it's always good to remind yourself of the key things the role needs from you and also what the values of the organisation are. This can help you see how you'll fit into the organisation and which of your skills are going to add the most value to the role.
- *Practise, practise, practise* – it's always good to try and predict some of the questions you may get asked and prepare some answers. Try popping these down as bullet point prompts and practise answering some standard interview questions. Also, if you need to have specific technical knowledge, make sure your up to date with your knowledge. A great model for answering interview questions is the STAR model mentioned in the application stage section of this guide. The STAR Model gives you a blueprint for covering everything you would need to when answering interview questions. It also ensures you draw on examples from real life experience or, where that's not possible, follow the steps through STAR and think what you would do in that situation to demonstrate you know what would be needed.

# Equal Opportunities

We recognise the importance of promoting equality of opportunity across all services as well as in the employment of our staff. We aim to promote equality of opportunity for all with the right mix of talent, skills and potential and we welcome applications from a diverse range of candidates.

Our Equality Policy supports our commitment to promoting inclusion.

# Documentation

**Right to Work in the UK.** If you are offered the post, we must take copies of evidence that you are able to legally work within the UK; the up to date list of the acceptable documents/combinations of documents which we must see and copy are available on gov.uk website or on Citizens Advise website 'Right to work in the UK' section. We will ask you to bring original documents with you on your first day at work.