



# Advocating for change

Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABx) in Glasgow are seeking your help.

Can you spare a few hours to help us campaign and advocate for change to improve people's lives?

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## What do Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABx) do?

- > Provide advice and information to ensure people can claim their rights
- > Campaign and advocate on the basis of evidence for legislative and policy change to improve people's lives

## The CABx record

Last year, across Scotland the 59 CABx:

- > Helped over 174,500 clients
- > Offered advice and information on over 640,000 different issues
- > Raised £132 million for clients in unclaimed and appealed benefits, cancelled debts and successful grant applications
- > Represented in over 2,000 tribunals with an 86% success rate

Every time a client visits a CABx the adviser makes a case record. This information generates both statistical data and valuable case studies that illustrate the problems people encounter with the laws on social security, utilities (energy and internet access) employment, housing, debt, family law and access to justice.

This evidence is gathered and analysed by Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) the network organisation for the CABx and is used to campaign and advocate for change. For example, CAS is currently campaigning to influence the administration of council tax and council tax debts, to ensure new housing legislation provides protections for private sector tenants and to improve the administration of the new adult disability payment.

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## Why do the Glasgow CABx need your help?

We need volunteers who will help to generate the evidence – the basis on which CABx campaign for change. Specific tasks could include:

- > Identifying and writing up case studies that will support CAS advocacy strategies
- > Helping the Glasgow CABx identify and design campaigns on local issues
- > Assisting with communications, for example, using social media to campaign or writing briefings on selected issues.

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## What training and support will I be offered?

Much of the training as a social policy co-ordinator is done online. You will complete basic modules that give you a broad understanding of the law and its implementation. In addition, there will be two face to face meetings either in a bureau or as a group in the university and a session with CAS social policy staff.

You will be allocated to a bureau near your home and the manager of the bureau will ensure that you receive support. The time commitment expected is 4 hours per week but this can be worked flexibly, for example, averaged out over a month or could be shared between two students. Initially it will be helpful to operate in your bureau until you feel confident but ultimately some work can be done remotely.

“You have been absolutely brilliant, wouldn’t be where I am now without all your help.”  
CAB client

“I appreciate the help I was given and it has made a big impact on my life. Thank you!”  
CAB client

## Why volunteer - what will I get out of it?

You will gain real understanding of how the law affects people’s lives. As a social policy student this will be invaluable – it will help you to realise the practical implications and impact of theory. Campaigns and advocacy address the root causes of people’s problems - you will be making a real contribution to improving lives.

“With CAB you’ll encounter people from every walk of life ... You’ll be seeing how things work in practice.”  
Student volunteer from Glasgow University Law School

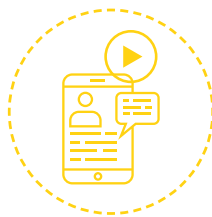
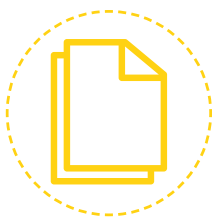
“I learned so much volunteering with CAB, real practical skills that have helped me with my academic studies.”  
Student volunteer from Glasgow University Law School

As well as gaining skills in understanding and articulating social policy issues, you will learn how to collate and analyse statistical data and frame case studies to provide evidence. In a bureau, the social policy co-ordinator has to work alongside the manager and advisers – you will be a valuable part of the CABx team. The volunteer experience will enhance your CV and assist you in your future career. Employers seek people who have the practical skills which enhance academic theory.

The training for social policy work is a new CABx venture but for the last 30 year Glasgow CABx have collaborated successfully with Glasgow University Law School, training law students as advisers. These volunteers have gone on to successful careers in the Scottish Human Rights Commission, the Scottish Government, as solicitors, advocates and as academics.

## How do I apply?

If you are interested in applying to become a social policy co-ordinator or have further questions you can email Gil Long (Chair of Parkhead CAB and Chair of the CAS Policy Forum) on [gil.long@cas.org.uk](mailto:gil.long@cas.org.uk)



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