JOB DESCRIPTION

Job title:	Trainee Housing Adviser
Location:	Housing Matters (Bristol), 176a Easton Road, BS5 0SE
Accountable to:	Senior Housing Adviser
Hours and leave:	35 hours per week Flexible working patterns/reduced hours to fit around existing caring responsibilities will be considered 25 days + Bank Holidays
Benefits:	Employer pension, Cycle to Work scheme, Employee Assistance Programme, flexible and remote working available.
Salary:	£27,195 (increasing upon qualification to Housing Adviser)
Contract:	Fixed term for 12 months (with funding secured for further years as a Housing Adviser following successful completion of the trainee programme).

An Introduction

We are delighted to be launching a new Housing Matters traineeship for a Housing Adviser who will work closely alongside our partner charity, Caring in Bristol. Housing Matters and Caring in Bristol have been working in partnership since 2021, building understanding of the issues impacting communities in Bristol, improving understanding of housing rights and ensuring people can access legal advice and are supported to act on it.

Thanks to new funding from the government, we are improving access to advice by embedding it within Caring in Bristol, via this dedicated role to support their homelessness prevention work and activities. This is an opportunity to help pilot a way of working that capitalises on the strengths of both organisations to support people impacted by Bristol's housing crisis. We envisage the new role will work from both Caring in Bristol and Housing Matters' offices/outreach locations to effectively deliver advice and meet the needs of clients/service users from both organisations.

Who we are

Housing Matters

Housing Matters, formerly known as CHAS (Bristol), is a specialist accredited housing advice, support and advocacy charity in Bristol. Over the last five years, the organisation has undergone significant growth and change, most notably increasing its team from four to 11 and undertaking a thorough rebrand.

We believe quality housing is a human right. We're here to give anyone in and around Bristol the knowledge and support they need to live in safe, secure homes. We work tirelessly with clients, offering both brief guidance, holistic support and long-term casework. We amplify

clients' voices to influence housing policy and empower people to fight for the home they deserve.

Our vision

Our vision is a society where everyone has a place, they're happy to call home.

Our mission

We are experts in housing advice, support and advocacy, here to help the people of Bristol and beyond navigate the path to a safe and secure home. We aim to find unique, long-term solutions for our clients, whatever their needs.

Our values

People First – Informed – Dedicated – Inclusive – Resourceful

Caring in Bristol

Caring in Bristol was founded in 1987 as Caring at Christmas, when a group of Bristolians responded to urgent need by jumping into action for people facing homelessness at a time when other services were closed. What started as a grassroots act of compassion has grown into a city-wide charity working all year round, but our founding spirit remains the same: to spot gaps in the systems around us and develop practical, innovative ways to respond.

We have three key focus areas; direct support, community activation and influencing change; working to alleviate the impact of homelessness while working to tackle its root causes. We provide specialist support for young people to prevent homelessness in their future, and we run services in communities disproportionately impacted by housing insecurity, to work with people before they reach a crisis point. We are passionate about the power of volunteering and community power to change the systems that lead to homelessness.

Our vision: Nobody is homeless in our city.

Our mission: Uniting Bristol to end homelessness.

Our values: Curiosity - Creativity – Collaboration - Tenacity

About you

Role Summary: Our Trainee Housing Advisers are expected to use their time as a trainee to gain all the knowledge and expertise needed to become an expert Housing Adviser. Trainees are provided with support and supervision and are gradually given increased responsibilities as their training progresses and their knowledge increases. Trainees are expected to complete relevant training (both in-house and external) in order to increase their knowledge and expertise as a housing adviser, so they feel capable and confident to provide advice by the end of the training programme.

You will complete training in order to provide specialised housing advice and advocacy on a range of issues including landlord and tenant disputes, housing related benefits and rehousing. As well as learning to provide legal advice, you will develop the skills needed to

offer support and encouragement to clients to motivate and empower them to resolve their own housing issues.

We're keen to have a staff team which is representative of the community we serve and also welcome applications from people with life experience of housing and homelessness issues to help us to shape and develop our service.

Responsibilities

- Develop knowledge of housing and homelessness legislation and regulation by completing training in relevant subjects and keeping abreast of regulation, legislation and case law changes/developments.

- Support the delivery of our Housing Advice Service (telephone, email, appointments, home visits and community hub drop-ins).

- With the support of the supervisor, triage telephone and email enquiries, assessing the nature of the query, urgency and most appropriate pathway.

- With the support of the supervisor, respond to enquiries and carry a caseload of clients, providing information, advice, practical help, advocacy and appropriate onward referrals.

- work closely with partner agencies to progress cases appropriately and in-line with relevant partnership and/or project agreement

- Offer a client-centred, holistic approach to promote the best outcome for the client.

- Maintain accurate and up-to-date records of enquiries and casework, using case monitoring software

- Work alongside volunteers, interns and trustees of the charity.

- Engage with and contribute to the development of the advice service as the charity grows.

- Support community outreach to engage a wider audience within the community.

- Work within Housing Matters policies and procedures, including equal opportunities, safeguarding, health and safety and confidentiality.

Trainee Housing Adviser

Person Specification

While we aim to recruit someone with existing knowledge of housing regulation and law, if you meet the other essential criteria training would be available for the right candidate.

		Essential	Desirable
Education	• Education to degree level, or equivalent relevant qualification, or substantial training and experience in a relevant role; and/or • Lived experience of housing/homelessness issues	X	
	• Evidence of ongoing interest and developing knowledge in housing/homelessness issues and/or continuing professional development and training	X	
Experience	• Recent experience providing advice, support and casework on housing or related issues; or • Lived experience of navigating housing/homelessness pathways		X
	• Experience of working with vulnerable people including young people and/or experience of working in your local community to help support vulnerable people		X
	• Proven experience of working under pressure and achieving individual targets	X	
	• Experience of providing advice at a specialist level (e.g. advocacy at court or tribunal)		X
	• Experience supporting volunteers		X
	• Recent experience of providing advice, support and casework in debt, financial capability and/or welfare benefits		X
Knowledge/ Understanding	• Basic knowledge and understanding of homelessness and housing issues	X	
	• Up to date knowledge of housing legislation and recent case law		X
	• Understanding of the advice and voluntary sector	X	
	• Knowledge of complex legal issues related to housing and homelessness, welfare benefits or financial capability and debt issues		X
Skills & Abilities	• Ability to assess, identify and prioritise client problems, identify and present potential solutions and develop	X	

	appropriate casework plans and strategies.		
	• Excellent written and verbal communication skills, with the ability to liaise effectively and positively with a wide range of individuals and organisations	X	
	• Ability to speak community language(s) to enable better communication verbally and in writing with various potential clients		X
	• Proficient in computer skills e.g. Microsoft Word, Excel and Outlook	X	
	• Experience of using electronic case management systems		X
	• Ability to maintain accurate case and statistical records, maintaining security and confidentiality at all times	X	
	• Attention to detail	X	
Personal Qualities	• Able to work both as part of a team and on own initiative, prioritising and managing own workload and time to meet targets and deadlines	X	
	• Enthusiastic, flexible and dedicated approach to work	X	
	• Strong interpersonal skills including active listening, empathy and compassion	X	
	• Commitment to the aims of Housing Matters (Bristol).	X	