

# Candidate Pack Chair

citizens  
advice



# Welcome

Dear applicant

Thank you for your interest in becoming our new Chair. At Citizens Advice we exist to give people the knowledge and confidence they need to find their way forward – whoever they are, and whatever their problem. Founded in 1939, our national charity and network of local charities offer confidential advice online, over the phone, and in person, for free. We're here for everyone and we're relied on because we're totally impartial.

We provide advice to people with many different kinds of problems. This gives us a uniquely deep insight into the challenges people are facing today, in an era of uncertainty and challenge. With the evidence we gather, we can show big organisations – from companies right up to Government – how they can make things better. We therefore have a significant role to play in influencing services and policy making across the UK, driving and shaping the thinking and decisions that stand to benefit people everywhere, now and in years to come.

Our new Chair will provide clear strategic leadership and support to a talented Board and senior executive as we progress through a period of extensive cultural and service transformation at Citizens Advice. The Board currently has a professional and collaborative approach, and a culture where everyone has the opportunity to speak and be heard and is able to bring their skills and experiences to bear.

With deep personal experience of leading comparably large and complex organisations, you will intuitively understand how to develop an effective board at this level, and where the priorities lie in our organisation. Your insight will enable you to bring constructive challenge, focus and clarity to the big issues we face and will be navigating in the coming years.

We're looking for someone already regarded as a trusted and influential presence, and who has personal stature and perspective. Effective interpersonal skills and high emotional intelligence are also important as we bring about positive change through strong relationships and alliances, and through the encouragement of co-operation and commitment to shared goals within and beyond our network.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is of strategic importance and integral to all we do as a service: central to pursuing our EDI mission is building a diverse and inclusive organisation in which everyone has a sense of belonging.

Yet inclusion is also a social justice issue, with equality disparities leading many of our clients to seek our services. We're seeking to increase the diversity of background and thinking on our Board and are committed to creating an equitable, diverse and inclusive workplace, fully reflective of the communities we serve. As Chair, your own commitment to this priority will be absolutely critical.

We're looking for people who are gifted strategic thinkers, natural collaborators, unfazed by complexity and comfortable carrying significant personal accountability. How you bring about your influence will be more important than your subject knowledge in this role, and you will be both personally flexible and available to meet the demands of a substantial strategic leadership post.

If you believe you can bring the experience, capability and leadership attributes we're looking for, we very much look forward to hearing from you.



**Jabbar Sardar**  
Deputy Chair of the Board



**Dame Clare Moriarty**  
Chief Executive



**Honestly Citizens Advice is such an important service at the moment. I don't think they realise just how important they are to people out there... having that extra energy and council tax help, it has taken the worry away. It takes the pressure of thinking, if the extra money hadn't come in, what would I have done?**

**Lucy, Client**



# About our organisation

The Citizens Advice service offers free, confidential advice online, over the phone and in person. We give people the knowledge and confidence they need to find their way forward—whenever they are, and whatever their problem. We're independent and impartial.

Citizens Advice is a network of around 250 independent local charities across England and Wales. Our services are provided by 11,000 local volunteers, 1,900 Witness Service volunteers, and 7,800 local and 1,000 national paid staff. We're in 1,870 community locations (including GP surgeries, libraries and courts) in England and Wales.

Through the training, information systems and operational support it provides, national Citizens Advice equips local Citizens Advice to deliver the highest quality advice to their community. Each local Citizens Advice is a member of the national Citizens Advice charity. All together we form the Citizens Advice service.

Citizens Advice helped 2.66 million people one-to-one, by phone, email, webchat or in person in 2022-23. Our advice website had over 42.7 million visits and 60.6 million page views.

We supported 80,000 witnesses in courts through the Witness Service and gave pension guidance to people aged over 50. We're also the statutory consumer watchdog for the energy and post industries, meaning we advocate on behalf of consumers in these markets.

We have real time data from our millions of clients. This evidence helps us identify emerging issues, understand what is causing them and make recommendations to policymakers on how to fix the problems.

Three in every four people who sought our help last year had their problem solved. Helping people solve their problems can stop issues getting worse and can save money further down the line. In 2021-22 we saved government and public services at least £717 million.



## Our strategic direction

Our vision is to shape a society where people face far fewer problems.

Our Future of Advice strategic framework 2019-2023 set the direction and provided the parameters within which we've continued to innovate, improve and adapt to provide people with the help they need.

We consciously developed a strategic framework, as distinct from a fixed strategy, to give us the flexibility to adapt to a rapidly changing world.

To keep delivering on our ambitions, we continually transform the way we do things, adapt to meet the changing needs of our clients, keep pace with rapid technological advances, and stay ahead in an increasingly challenging funding environment.

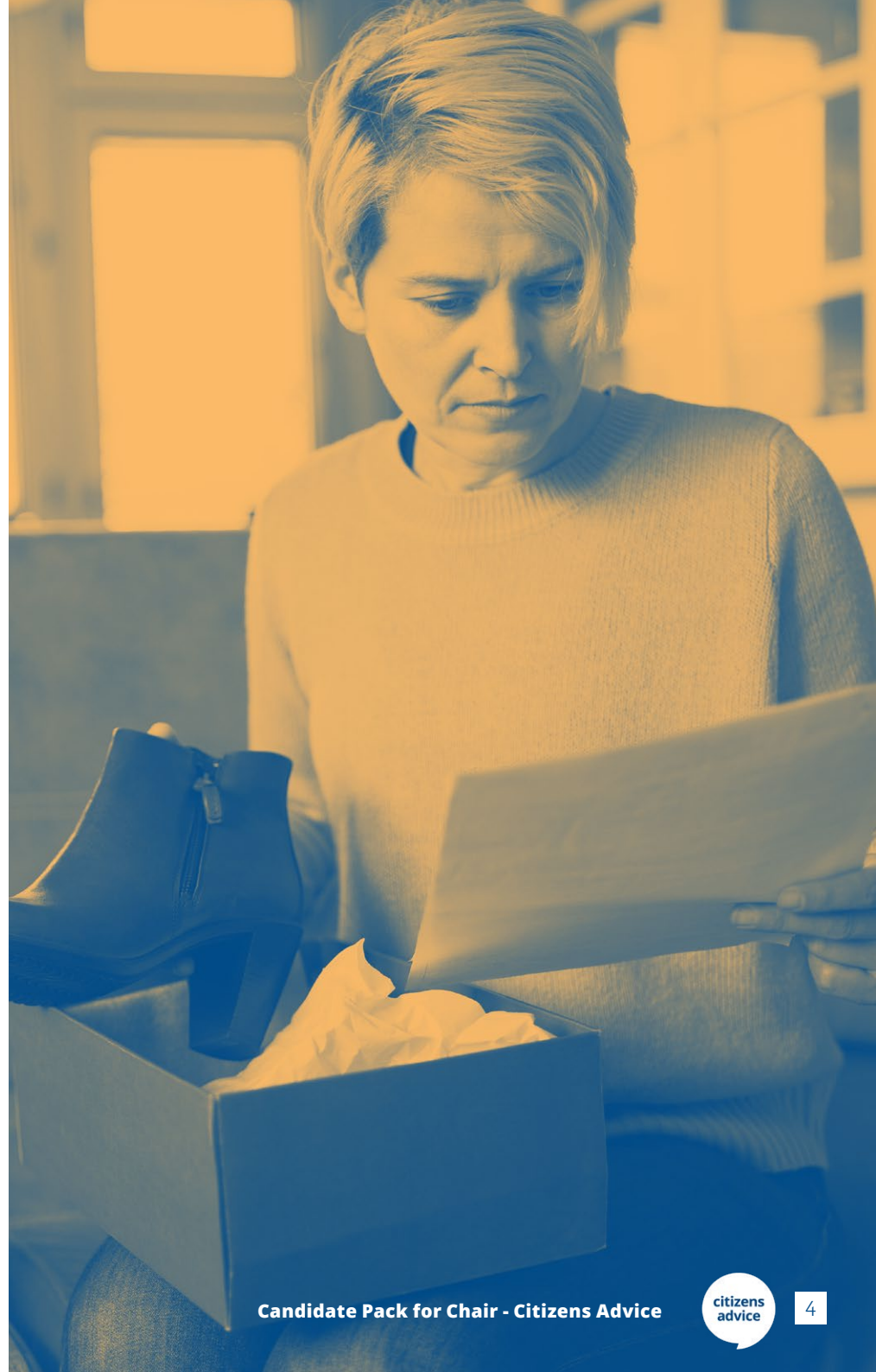
Originally the Future of Advice strategy was intended to run from 2019-2022, and we made the decision to extend this framework for an extra year to give us the time necessary to develop a new strategy for the whole service.

During the lifetime of that strategy we achieved transformational impact across the service. This included, amongst many other achievements, establishing our partnership with the Trussell Trust to help those in crisis, successfully helping almost 200,000 people a year to claim Universal Credit through our Help to Claim service, and responding to an unprecedented pandemic which saw us have to redesign our service model virtually overnight.

Looking ahead, we want to build on our experience of using strategic frameworks, rather than traditional strategies, to create something which is genuinely responsive to the changing environments that we operate and the people we support live in.

As a result in 2022 to 2023 we've been developing a living, or adaptive, strategy. This has seen us dig deep into our fundamentals; our purpose, identity, methods and missions to act as anchors when we're making challenging decisions both day-to-day and in the medium and longer term.

It's been a collaborative, cross-organisation effort and there's more to do through 2023 and 2024 to really bring it to life for our colleagues, the people we help and our partners and funders.



## Equality, diversity and inclusion

Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is integral to all we do as a service, not only for the people we help, but also for our volunteers and staff.

We seek to research and understand how issues in society impact on our volunteers, staff and the people we help in different ways, and we aim to ensure that the diversity of needs among our clients, particularly those from marginalised groups, is taken into account.

Our research shows that groups marginalised by society are disproportionately affected by societal issues such as benefits, housing, employment and household finances. The pandemic shone a light on these pre-existing inequalities and made some of them worse.

Because of these social inequalities and the worsening cost-of-living crisis, we know that marginalised communities are more likely to need our advice, support and advocacy.

This year, Citizens Advice has continued to highlight and work towards addressing the equality disparities faced by clients and our colleagues across the service. We have developed tools to enhance our organisational EDI capability, which is more important than ever during the cost-of-living crisis.

We continue to ensure that EDI is at the heart of strategic planning and decision-making, particularly as we work on our new living strategy.

## Find out more

[Visit our website](#)

[Read our 2021-2022 Impact Report here](#)

[Read our 2021-2022 Annual Report here](#)

Footnote: all data above is from our 2021-22 annual report. Our 2022-23 data will be publicly available in November 2023



**I have been with Citizen's Advice for one year now and enjoyed every minute! The thing I enjoy most about my role is knowing that I am helping someone when I give advice.**

**Claire, Volunteer Adviser**



# The Chair appointment

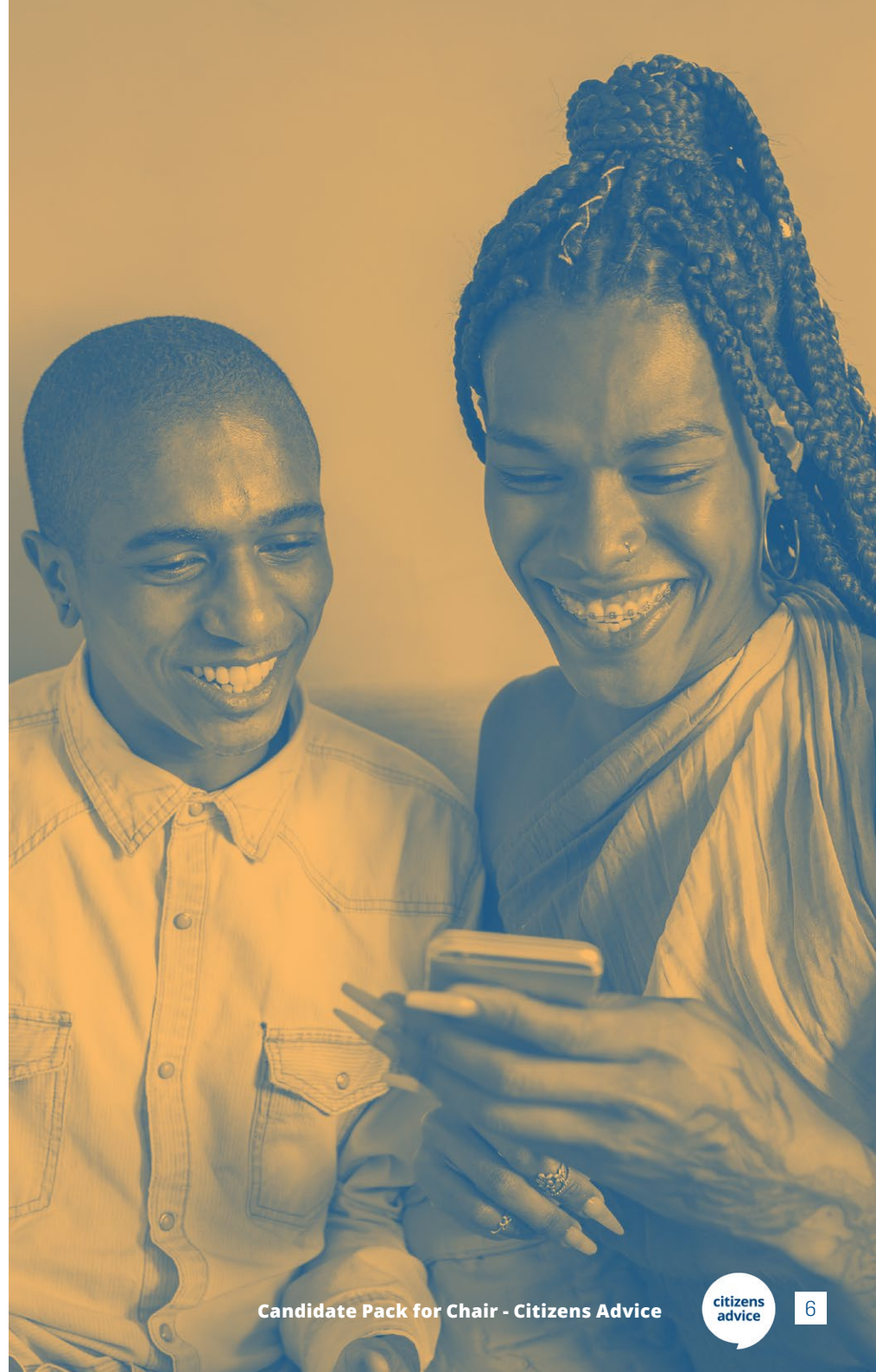
The Board of Trustees is National Citizens Advice's most senior governance group. It provides support, strategic direction and constructive challenge to the Executive Team. It also plays a collaborative role in ensuring strong governance across around 250 local Citizens Advice network, strengthening our service as a whole.

Our Chair leads and inspires the Board to deliver our organisation's strategic ambitions successfully, so we can make a significant difference to the lives of people Citizens Advice is here to serve. Our Chair also leads the Board to shape strategic direction and assure progress. We're looking for a Chair who will work with our CEO to seize the opportunity to increase the profile of the whole of the Citizens Advice service, including our advice delivery and policy and influencing activities.

## The Chair of Citizens Advice is responsible for

- Leading the Board to assure progress against strategic priorities, as well as maintaining clear oversight of the charity's activities and setting high standards of governance.
- Leading the Board to set strategy across a large and complex federated service at a time of substantial change and transformation.
- Working in effective partnership with, supporting, and providing stretch and constructive challenge to the Chief Executive and their team.
- Acting as ambassador, engaging with stakeholders, clients, colleagues, volunteers, government and commissioners across a diverse stakeholder landscape. (This will include developing strategic relationships with around 250 members of the Citizens Advice network and undertaking relevant AGM responsibilities.)
- Leading and facilitating the Board to work as an effective and cohesive team, where contributions are effective and encouraged, where there are positive working relationships and a culture where differences are aired and resolved.
- Ensuring that the Board has what it needs in place, such as the right complement of skills, knowledge, networks and experiences to achieve strategic priorities, and that its practices are fit for purpose, including frequency and duration of meetings.
- Ensuring that the performance of the Board, its committees and individual trustees is evaluated at least once a year, acting on the results by recognising the strengths and addressing the weaknesses of the Board.
- Ensuring equitable and inclusive practices are prioritised at all levels of our organisation, developing a culture where all of our clients, volunteers and staff are valued, treated equitably and belong.
- Role modelling the highest standards of conduct and integrity.

*The Chair will be expected to perform all such additional duties as are reasonable, commensurate with the profile and responsibility of the role.*



# Who we are looking for

## Your knowledge and experience

- Senior organisational leadership experience gained in other similarly large and complex operating environments, ideally in more than one sector.
- Practical experience of leading or overseeing organisational transformation, and of helping to stabilise and refocus organisations during periods of major change.
- Substantial experience of working with a multi-skilled non-executive board membership and of developing inclusive and diverse boards.
- Knowledge of big charity governance principles and practices.
- Knowledge of communicating effectively with diverse stakeholder groups.
- Experience of a complex federated charity environment (or able to relate to the specific challenges of federated structures).

## Your skills and abilities

- Strategic mindset: you will be focused on the long term, looking to the future with an appreciation of wider trends, and will bring and integrate perspectives from different contexts.
- Astute: you will bring sharp commercial acumen.
- Strong Board chairing skills: you will have a great track record of actively facilitating discussion and debate, summarising points of discussion to support decision making, and consensus building.
- Personally influential: you will be someone known for their compelling communication style, listening skills, excellent judgement and diplomacy.

## Your personal style and behaviours

- A trusted presence, with low ego and high personal credibility; you will bring an engaging and collaborative style that inspires confidence.
- Strong organisational development orientation: you will be interested in developing our Board and in supporting wider organisational dynamics.
- We are looking for someone with undisputed personal integrity and a fair, inclusive and open leadership style.
- Your values will be compatible with those of our organisation.
- You will be sensitive to the political, social and economic environment in which the Citizens Advice service operates.



**I can't really put into words... how thankful I am to Citizens Advice. If it wasn't for them I would have just given up.**

**When I first applied they awarded me zero points. I reapplied and was given four points. I knew this wasn't right, so I got in touch with Citizens Advice. They were absolutely amazing, especially my advisor Cathy. She did a mandatory request and asked for my case to go to a tribunal.**

**I received a call from DWP and they said they'd looked at my case and would be giving me the highest personal and mobility award. On top of that they backdated my award for the year, so I received just over £8k and I am about £600 better off a month.**

**I can't really put into words how this money will help me and how thankful I am to Cathy and Citizens Advice. If it wasn't for the Citizens Advice I would have just given up. Cathy worked so hard on this for me and I'm truly thankful.**

**Ray, Client**



# Terms of Appointment

## Time commitment

Up to three days per month; occasionally this may be slightly more.

We are looking for a Chair who can offer the personal flexibility and availability to commit to the role during a time of substantial change and development. There may be some periods that require a higher time commitment than others.

## Remuneration

This appointment is offered on a voluntary basis with all reasonable expenses incurred as part of the role reimbursed in full.

## Location of meetings

The Chair must be willing to travel as required for any in person meetings that may be held in 1 of our 4 offices – Birmingham, Cardiff, Leeds and London or other locations across England and Wales.





# How to express an interest in the role

We hope you will consider making an application to become Chair of our Board at Citizens Advice. To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/ca-chair/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- a CV (no more than three sides) or equivalent biographical information
- a short covering letter that explains your motivation, suitability, availability and confirms that you would not be subject to any conflict of interest
- please tell us if there are any dates during the selection process (outlined below) when you would not be available to participate.
- If you have a disability and identify any barriers in the job description or person specification, please tell us.

We would also be grateful if you would also complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and is not treated as part of your application.

The closing date is **Friday 1st September 2023**.

## Selection Timetable

Closing date	Monday 25th September 2023
Longlisting	Friday 29th September 2023
Preliminary interviews	Early October 2023
Shortlist meeting	Mid-October 2023 (TBC)
Informal conversations with the CEO and local leadership panels	w/c 16th October 2023
Final interviews	w/c 16th October to w/c 30th October
AGM ratification	16th November 2023



## Forward Board and Committee meeting dates

Trustee board meeting	Tuesday 31st October 2023
Annual general meeting	Thursday 16th November 2023
Trustee board strategy day	Tuesday 21st November 2023
Trustee board meeting	Tuesday 23rd January 2024
Trustee board meeting	Wednesday 27th March 2024
Trustee board meeting	Tuesday 14th May 2024
Trustee board strategy day	Wednesday 19th June 2024

