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**Tower Hamlets Trainee Advice Project**

**Information for Applicants**

**General Information**

THCAN is a partnership of advice agencies that work in Tower Hamlets helping residents secure their statutory and legal rights, enabling them to improve their living standards and quality of life. The training project links volunteers with advice centres in the borough and delivers a training course. Island Advice centre is the lead agency for this project and deals with recruitment and training course delivery.

Volunteers are invaluable to helping to deliver the much needed advice services provided in the borough. The training and work placements provide volunteers with valuable, client focused work experience which helps when looking for employment.

**Nature of volunteering work**

Access to advice and advocacy is the core work of the all the organisations in the partnership, client groups and venues vary but all agencies provide advice on welfare rights, housing and debt issues. All work is supervised and training is provided. You will assist clients with welfare benefits, housing and debt matters under the supervision of trained staff. You could be helping with sorting out benefit problems, filing in a forms, contacting a creditor to arrange or dispute payments for debts. You will be interviewing clients, finding out their situation, supporting them to resolve their problem or referring them to alternative services.

**Suitable for**

You do not need any previous experience but good literacy and communication skills are essential. You do not need to have any qualifications but all applicants have to sit a literacy test. This is a Level 2 test which takes one hour, you are required read some written information and answer questions on it, also you will have to write a letter. Advice work can be stressful and demanding, you need to be able to able to deal with clients in a non-judgemental, supportive and empathetic manner. You will need basic computer skills.

**Time commitment**:

2 days per week for 12 months:

* 1 day a week volunteering (days/times/venues vary – can start any time)
* 1 day per week training (Tuesdays 9.50 to 4.30, Canary Wharf) September 2015 to July 2016: training is term times only

**Training provided**:

Training includes: advice skills (interview/communication skills, policies and principals in advice, welfare rights (benefits overview, ESA, disability benefits, etc), housing foundation (security of tenure, homelessness, allocations), debt advice, immigration and employment rights. Training is delivered by a range of trainers, experts in their field. We also offer Level 3 Certificate in Advice and Guidance (NVQ), you have to completes the training and obtain funding for this though.

**Venues for volunteering**

We work with over 20 advice centres throughout the Tower Hamlets area (East London). Look at [www.thcan.org.uk](http://www.thcan.org.uk) for a full list of the organisations where placements can take place. Please do not contact them directly we will have full details of where vacancies are and once you have applied, we will refer you to them.

**Recruitment procedure**

You need to complete and return the attached application. You will be invited to an informal group information session and sit a test within a month of receiving this application. Once you have done this your application will linked to one of the partner agencies and they will interview you. Recruitment is ongoing, information sessions held monthly, you will be invited to one once we receive your application

**Contact** jo@island-advice.org.uk to request an application form