



**Torrige, North,
Mid & West Devon**

Why should I volunteer for Citizens Advice?

If and when you hear the words “I’m Chris ...” you will know that you are connected to one of Devon’s ADVICELINE gateway assessors, the National Citizens Advice telephone helpline. So who am I, how did I get here, and what is it that I actually do for the Torrige, North, Mid and West Devon Citizens Advice Charity?

After many years of tramping Devon’s fields and byways as a water leak detector, I retired and then faced the terrifying possibility of becoming housebound. The thought of unceasing gardening and DIY was too much, so I decided I had better find something more challenging to do with all this new spare time. After considerable investigation and a visit to Okehampton’s Voluntary Services office, I found myself directed to the town’s Citizens Advice, an independent Charity that makes up Torrige, North, Mid and West Devon Citizens Advice.

Two very well informed and friendly ladies from TNMWD Citizens Advice interviewed me from the Okehampton office in the Ockment Centre in North Street, asking questions about my past experiences of life and my attitudes towards other people. They told me how Citizens Advice operated and stressed how important confidentiality and impartiality would be in my work for them. It was then explained to me how I would be trained and what I would have to do before I was let loose on ‘joe public’.

The training was thorough and very interesting. It was not too difficult although I had to do some of it at home. Now three months down the line and still learning, I receive calls from across the County and try to help people tackle their issues.

The problems can be of almost any form; cannot pay my council tax, how do I fill out my tax form, next door play their radio too loud, I cannot get my wheel chair mended, my wife has emptied our account, etc., etc.

Under the watchful eye of my supervisor I start on tackling the problem. In most cases I can do this by consulting a large data base and passing the required information on. If the problem is more complex I book them an appointment at their convenience at one of our 11 Offices across Devon.

So what do I get out of this? Well apart from some great new friends, lashings of homemade cakes, and my expenses, it’s the fantastic feeling of really being helpful to others with a problem to be sorted.

Fancy volunteering in your local offices? Email trainingofficer@ruraldevoncab.org.uk for more information or visit www.ruraldevoncab.org.uk

Offices at: Barnstaple, Bideford, Crediton, Cullompton, Holsworthy, Ilfracombe, Okehampton, South Molton, Tavistock, Tiverton, Torrington

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