



Part time Welfare Benefits Advisor Information for Candidates

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Letter from the President

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in Sangam Association of Asian Women, a not-for-profit charity based in Barnet established and managed by Asian Women.

For over forty years, Sangam has been at the forefront of hands-on community service. Established in 1971, it provided activities for the distressed immigrants of Asian origin, to socialise and integrate into their new society. Today, its core activity is still the Advice Centre and Counselling Services which provide free services at to all those in the wider community requiring help and guidance. The consistent high standards of the services and the dedication of the volunteers have made Sangam one of the most respected voluntary organisations in UK and recipient of the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award.

Sangam's aim has been to keep abreast with the ever-changing needs of the community and expand its services accordingly. We give advice on immigration, welfare benefits, debt to name a few, and have now added Counselling services for Domestic Violence and Mental Health sufferers, as well as, Personal Debt counselling. We serve almost 6000 clients a year at our purpose-built centre of which the halls are hired out to generate income. Our aim is to raise funds for these deserving services that help empower socially and economically disadvantaged people.

We have a new post of Part time Welfare Benefits Advisor to provide advice and casework service to clients from the diverse community and the Asian speaking community. The role involves advising in all areas of Social Welfare Law.

Sangam is proud to confirm that we successfully meet the requirements and have the OISC Certification and the Advice Quality Standard Certification.

Working alongside a committed and experienced team of advisors, you will bring experience and professionalism to this role. If this opportunity inspires you and you have the relevant experience and excellent communication skills then we look forward to hearing from you.

Sudha Sanghani

President
Sangam Association of Asian Women



About Sangam

Sangam, a rare association in the not-for-profit sector, is managed by Asian women volunteers. It is now into its 40th year, and its purpose-built centre into its 20th year. Sangam was honoured to have The Centre inaugurated by the late Diana, Princess of Wales, in 1991.

Established in 1971 to help the influx of immigrants from East Africa who felt isolated and distressed, it provided activities for them to socialise and integrate into their new society. Today, its core activity is still the Advice Centre, which provides free services to all those requiring help and guidance. The consistent high standards of the services and the dedication of the volunteers have made Sangam one of Barnet's most respected voluntary organisations. It has been at the forefront in providing the much needed support and help to the wider community.

Sangam has kept abreast of the ever-changing demands and needs of the community at large by providing different aspects of services. By researching and reaching out to the community, Sangam has got much needed funding for projects such as Domestic Violence Counselling for women, men and young people and the Young Dragons, a programme specifically aimed in developing and improving core life skills for young people aged between 15 and 25 years.

In 2006, Sangam was a proud recipient of the Queen's Golden Jubilee Award, a jewel in Sangam's crown, which has served to raise the profile of Sangam nationally for voluntary services.

What make Sangam exceptional is its neutrality, independence and self-reliance. Sangam's Advice Centre is largely funded by hiring out its halls and facilities. It is secular, non-political and open to all regardless of race, gender or disability. The impact to the society can be felt through the comments of appreciation by the clients who come to our advisors and counsellors. More than 6000 people a year are served by Sangam's Advice Centre, aptly considered by the local population as a pillar of the Barnet community.

The kind message from the Home Office on behalf of the Prime Minister read out on Sangam's 25th Anniversary sums up all: "One of Sangam's strengths is that it is managed by Asian women and so will provide a service sensitive to the needs of a group not always well-served by mainstream services. However it is to Sangam's credit that it is open to all – an example of social inclusion at its best".

Role Description

Position:	Part time Welfare Benefits Advisor
Hours per week:	20 hours (alternate Saturday mornings)
Salary:	£20,000 - £22,000 pa pro rata
Contract:	Permanent
Reporting to:	Charity Manager
Closing Date:	20 th October 2017

Purpose

Sangam is a voluntary organisation, providing advice and assistance to BAMER community and their families across London. The service also provides information and advice by appointments, emails and has a dedicated website. We wish to recruit a part-time advisor to provide advice to users of Sangam, within the aims policies and principles of the Sangam Advice Centre service.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

❖ Provision of advice and casework

- Interview clients, using sensitive listening and questioning skills in order to allow clients to explain their problem(s).
- Use Citizen's Advice Information System, Advisernet, to find, interpret and communicate the relevant information.
- Explore options and implications so that the client can make decisions.
- Negotiate with third parties, including statutory and non-statutory organizations as required.
- Act for the client where necessary by calculating, negotiating, drafting or writing letters and telephoning.
- Provide advice at Sangam Centre

❖ Planning and development

- With the Sangam team, keep service delivery under continual review and identify need, to ensure that the service reaches all the different groups within Barnet and surrounding boroughs

❖ Public relations

- Responsible for provision of monthly reports to the Charity Manager and Management Committee.
- Provide talks and information for and on behalf of Sangam, and to other Agencies as required
- To be involved in publicizing Sangam service

❖ Social Policy and Monitoring

- Assist with social policy work by providing information about clients' circumstances through the appropriate channel.
- Provide statistical information on a regular basis

❖ Professional Development

- Keep up to date with legislation, case law, policies, and procedures and undertake appropriate training
- Attend appropriate internal and external meetings as agreed with the Charity Manager
- Read appropriate publications.
- Prepare for and attend regular supervision sessions.

❖ Administration

- Be self-servicing
- Maintain detailed case records for the purpose of continuity of casework, information retrieval, statistical monitoring and report preparation. Ensure that all work conforms to the Sangam systems and procedures.
- Use IT for document production and inputting data on AdvicePro Case Management System

❖ Team work

- To work effectively as part of Sangam team

❖ Other duties and responsibilities

- Promote the aims, policies, membership requirements and equal opportunities policies of the Sangam service.
- Carry out any other reasonable duties as required by the Development Manager to ensure the effective provision of the service.
- Abide by health and safety guidelines and share responsibility for own safety and that of colleagues.
- Attend evening meetings as necessary
- Travel within London as necessary

Person Specification

Job Title: Part time Welfare Benefits Advisor

Essential Criteria

Experience

1. A minimum of two years welfare benefits advice work experience gained at a CAB, Advice UK agency, or similar setting. This experience will include casework.

Ability/Skills/Knowledge

2. Understand, and empathize with, the aims and principles of the Sangam service and its equal opportunities policies.
3. Ability to plan and prioritize own work, meet deadlines and manage caseload.
4. Ability to give and receive feedback objectively and sensitively and a willingness to challenge constructively.
5. Ability to monitor and maintain own standards.
6. Effective written and oral communication skills with particular emphasis on negotiating and providing talks on the Sangam service.
7. Understanding of the issues effecting BME Communities, and the implications for service provision.
8. Ability to use IT in the provision of advice and the preparation of reports.
9. Flexible approach and willingness to work as part of a team.
10. Ability to research, analyze and interpret complex information.
11. Numeracy skills required to understand statistics and check calculations.
12. Knowing an Indian ethnic language is desirable

How to Apply

Candidates need to fill in the attached application form.