

Full time Debt 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 post of full time Administrator to provide administrative support to members of Sangam. They will be responsible and accountable for contributing to the smooth running of Sangam's communication systems.

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:	Debt Advisor
Hours per week:	35 hours (alternate Saturday mornings)
Salary:	£30,940 pa dependent on experience and qualifications
Contract:	3 Years (Subject to extension depending on funding being secured)
Reporting to:	Charity Manager

Purpose

- To provide an effective and efficient specialist debt advice and support service within the aims, policies and principles of Sangam services.

Main Duties

1. Casework.

- 1.1 Provide casework covering the full range of debt advice.
- 1.2 Act for the client where necessary by calculating, negotiating, drafting or writing letters and telephoning.
- 1.3 Negotiate with third parties as appropriate and set up the necessary systems to take effective referrals from the named partners.
- 1.4 Ensure income maximization through the take up of appropriate benefits.
- 1.5 Prepare and present cases to the appropriate statutory bodies and courts as appropriate.
- 1.6 Assist clients with other related problems where they are an integral part of their case and refer to other advisers or specialist agencies as appropriate.
- 1.7 Work with admin staff, within our minimum requirements
- 1.8 Ensure that all casework conforms to Sangam's office manual and the Advice Quality Standard Certification requirements.
- 1.9 Maintain case records for the purpose of continuity of casework, information retrieval, statistical monitoring, and report preparation.

1.10 Work to given targets in line with the criteria set by the funder.

2. Training

2.1 Develop the training programme with the support of Administrator.

2.2 Co-ordinate and deliver the training on a quarterly basis.

3. Volunteers and Mentoring

3.1 Recruit and train a small pool of volunteers to provide IT support

3.2 Co-ordinate the volunteers to provide mentoring to services users towards the self-help tools.

4. Professional Development

4.1 Keep up to date with legislation, case law, policies and procedures relating to money advice, and attend appropriate training.

4.2 Read relevant publications.

4.3 Attend relevant internal and external meetings as agreed with the line manager.

4.4 Prepare for and attend supervision sessions.

5. Administration

5.1 Use IT for statistical recording, record keeping and document production.

5.2 Maintain reference material and local information systems.

5.3 Provide regular reports to the Manager, board and the funder.

5.4 Ensure that all work conforms to the Centre's administrative policies and procedures.

6. Other duties and responsibilities

6.1 Carry out any other tasks that may be within the scope of the post to ensure the effective delivery and development of the service.

6.2 Participation in Project Development including the delivery of training where appropriate..

6.3 Uphold the aims and principles of Sangam services and its equal opportunities policies.

6.4 Abide by health and safety guidelines and share responsibility for own safety and that of colleagues.

Person Specification: Debt Advisor

ESSENTIAL CRITERIA

- 1 A minimum of two years experience of client focused money advice casework (in a paid or voluntary capacity).
- 2 Is an Intermediary registered by the Insolvency Service to input Debt Relief Orders.
- 3 Must demonstrate a good awareness of the benefits system and how this relates to the needs of disabled clients.
- 4 Proven ability to work in a cooperative and flexible manner within a team ethos irrespective of personal opinions.
- 5 An up to date knowledge of legislation and court procedures relevant to giving debt advice.
- 6 Effective oral communication skills with particular emphasis on negotiating and representing.
- 7 Effective writing skills with particular emphasis on preparing reports and correspondence
- 8 Ordered approach to casework and an ability to follow and develop agreed procedures.
- 9 The ability to work methodically within defined systems and to maintain accurate case and statistical records, using computers where appropriate.
- 10 Ability to be an effective court advocate.
- 11 Ability to prioritise tasks, to identify and work to deadlines and to manage time effectively under own initiative.
- 12 Ability to give and receive feedback objectively and sensitively and a willingness to challenge constructively.
- 13 Ability to monitor and maintain own standards.
- 14 An understanding and commitment to work within the aims and principles of Sangam services and its equal opportunities policies.

DESIRABLE

- A Demonstrate an understanding of social trends and their implications for clients and service provision.
- B Knowledge of Advice Pro casework management system
- C Knowledge of working in an outreach setting

- D Experience of delegating work to admin staff
- E Experience of working effectively and supportively with volunteers
- D Ability to satisfy Money Advice Standards of Competence