

Benefits of being a member

As a member of AdviceUK, your organisation benefits from being part of the largest network of independent advice centres in the UK. Feeding into our consultation responses and policy work means that the experiences of your centre are brought to the attention of government at all levels and other key agencies. Meeting the standards of our membership criteria demonstrates to funders that you have key policies and procedures in place to help you secure funding whilst service users are reassured that you are independent.

In addition to helping you have your organisation's voice heard; AdviceUK membership also brings a number of practical benefits that can help your organisation on a day-to-day basis. We are constantly looking at new ways of helping our member agencies and would welcome any suggestions you may have to add to these.

Major benefits currently available include:

Management support helpline – Members have access to a telephone helpline providing free advice, information and guidance in respect of Tax, VAT, PAYE, Payroll, NIC, Employment, Health & Safety and Commercial Legal matters (including company law, landlord & tenant legislation, consumer protection, intellectual property issues and debt & debt recovery). The service is free and operates from 8am – 6pm Monday – Friday.

Money advice support – We have a full time Money Advice Co-ordinator who is primarily involved in carrying out social policy work on behalf of members as well as representing AdviceUK on a wide range of external national bodies. This post acts as a resource for members, giving advice on everything from the best resources available to helping provide contact with the media. Also, members can opt to receive a regular email newsletter to stay in touch with the latest developments in the field.

Group debt counselling licence – Full members can apply to be included in our group licence from the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) under the Consumer Credit Act. Any agency who provides debt/money advice must be registered with the OFT and the group licence provides an easy way for AdviceUK members registering annually.

Local to you – We have established active networks for our members in the East of England, Wales and the East Midlands in addition to our long established London team funded through London Councils. We are in the process of setting up new networks for our members in Scotland and the West Midlands. We have recruited new team of workers based in the English regions through a successful bid to the Big Lottery Fund as part of the Advice Services Alliance (ASA). We are committed to further extending numbers of our staff based outside London, including workers based in Wales and Scotland as soon as we can secure funding.

Training and NVQs – We are gradually expanding our training capacity across the country, developing from a strong London base. A programme of Adviser and Management training courses is offered together with bespoke courses. Our NVQ Assessment centre for Advice & Guidance, Training & Development and Management offers assessment, verification and accreditation of NVQs and is focused on the development of training and NVQ infrastructure for the whole advice sector.

Mailings – AdviceUK keeps you informed through a number of email and postal mailings ensuring you find out the news that's relevant to you. You will also receive a free copy of *Review* covering social security issues and AdviceUK's new quarterly magazine which each issue focuses on a cross-cutting topic relevant to the whole advice community.

Members' only web site – Through our extranet web site we can ensure that members have exclusive access to information and briefing materials. We are exploring opportunities to increase interactivity on the site to facilitate greater networking between member agencies.

Case management: AdvicePro – Launched in the autumn of 2007, AdvicePro provides a cost-effective way for agencies to take their case management to the next level. Entirely web based, the system provides a secure way for your staff to maintain records without having to worry about servers, back ups or installing the latest update. Developed in partnership with AdviceUK, Law Centres Federation and Pivotal Integration Ltd, the system will continue to evolve to meet members needs. AdviceUK will also benefit as we will have access to anonymous top-level statistical data that will inform and help our national policy, campaigning and lobbying work.

Insurance – Many agencies tell us they think the discounted insurance that members can access is worth the membership fee alone! We currently offer a number of insurance products:

- Professional indemnity insurance
- Trustees, directors and officers insurance
- Legal assistance and expenses insurance
- Business essentials inc employers liability/public liability insurance

Please contact us if you want to get a quotation to see if you can save by insuring through us. AdviceUK is authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority in respect of insurance mediation activities.

Job adverts – We have negotiated a deal with a leading recruitment advertising agency, TMP Worldwide, so that they will typeset your job advertisements for free. Because of the combined volume of adverts our network places with them each year, members advertising in *The Guardian* through TMP Worldwide also benefit from a cheaper advert than if you advertised through other routes. AdviceUK also offers an extremely cost effective recruitment option via our web site and mailings to help you get your adverts seen by workers in the advice sector. Why pay hundreds of pounds to advertise on any other web site?

For information on these or any other aspect of AdviceUK's work please contact the AdviceUK membership team: membership@adviceuk.org.uk or 020 7469 5700. You can also visit our web site: www.adviceuk.org.uk