

# AdviceUK Network Membership – Eligibility Criteria

## Eligibility

- AdviceUK Network Membership is open to organisations or projects<sup>1</sup> that provide social welfare advice<sup>2</sup> and can satisfy the current membership criteria.

## Current membership criteria

For each of the following membership criteria, we give a link to further guidance. We use this guidance to assess membership applications.

- Your advice is [independent and impartial](#) with the interests of the client being paramount
- Your advice is [confidential](#)
- The [terms on which your service\(s\) are provided](#) are clearly stated
- Your advice is covered by [Professional Indemnity Insurance](#)<sup>3</sup>
- Your organisation has a [complaints](#) procedure
- Your organisation can demonstrate [openness and accountability](#) to clients and other stakeholders
- The work of your organisation is [compatible with AdviceUK's vision, purpose and values](#)<sup>4</sup>
- Your organisation can demonstrate commitment to [equality and diversity](#)

## Notes

1. We take a social economy approach to an organisation's eligibility for AdviceUK membership, i.e. we place greater emphasis on what it does and how it does it than on how it is constituted. This recognises the diverse range of services, groups and organisations that give advice. Applications are welcome from advice services and organisations across the voluntary, social enterprise, public and private sectors. This includes unincorporated associations, charities (whether incorporated as charities or CIOs), other social purpose structures (such as mutuals, co-ops and Community Interest Companies), operational units of public bodies, and private companies pursuing social purposes that are compatible with AdviceUK's aims. Please note however that applicant members without a clear governance structure, legal identity or social purpose may find it more difficult to evidence how they meet eligibility criteria.

2. Social welfare advice is the term we use to describe those areas of civil law in which charitable and non-profit advice agencies have tended to develop expertise and to offer information, advice and assistance. These are the areas of civil law relevant to difficulties most frequently experienced by people who are on low incomes or who are otherwise disadvantaged. Areas of social welfare law and advice include (but are not restricted to): debt, welfare benefits, housing, employment, education, discrimination, immigration, community care and consumer rights.
3. Note that this type of insurance is not the same as Public and/or Employers Liability cover. AdviceUK offers Professional Indemnity Insurance cover, but it is not a requirement that applicants hold Professional Indemnity Insurance cover provided by AdviceUK.
4. Information on AdviceUK's vision, purpose and values can also be found on our website.

**PLEASE NOTE REGARDING APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP:**

- I. We reserve the right to decline any application for valid reasons e.g. inappropriate purpose(s) or regulatory conflict. If we do decline, we will explain our reasons.
- II. For the purposes of your initial application we ask you to confirm that you have read the eligibility criteria and to declare that you comply. We may ask you to provide evidence of compliance at the point of application or at a later stage in the membership year e.g. we may ask you to give us sight of policies or procedures that evidence your eligibility. If you don't at present satisfy all of the criteria, or are uncertain about whether you comply, please do contact us for guidance. We will be happy to help.