



Senior Adviser (money advice and welfare benefits)

20 hours per week at £15.24 per hour, maternity cover

This is a maternity cover post, expected to last from March 2021 to 30/5/2022. Exact dates may vary.

We are seeking a proactive and organised individual to join the Ablewell team. Ablewell Advice Walsall is an initiative of the Central Hall Methodist Church. Central Hall is a registered charity and our services are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

We provided specialist advice in relation to debt and welfare benefit matters. Our philosophy is to provide advice that is “people-centred, putting the client and their needs first”. We are a distribution centre for the Black County Foodbank and run a Job Club. Working hours would be Mon 9.30- 3, Tues 9.30- 12, Weds 9.30-3, Fri 9.30-3.

The successful candidate’s duties would include:

- Provision of specialist advice and casework in relation to debt and welfare benefits
- Maintaining accurate case records and managing cases proactively
- Oversight, coordination and off-site delivery of our advice in schools project
- Supporting the training needs of our trainee adviser.
- Liaising with colleagues and management committee to ensure effective service delivery

We are seeking someone who:

- Has at least 2 years recent experience of delivering welfare benefits and debt casework within an advice agency or similar
- Is able to independently manage a caseload, taking a proactive approach
- Is trustworthy and comfortable with handling confidential information
- Enjoys working as part of a small team
- Is flexible and adaptable
- Is sympathetic to the Christian ethos of our organisation.

This post is subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.

For an informal discussion about this role, please contact Keely Gabriel, Project Manager: 01922 639 700, keelygabriel@ablewelladvice.org.uk. Application packs can be downloaded from the news page at www.ablewelladvice.org.uk or can be requested from the Project Manager using the above contact details. CVs will not be accepted.

Closing date: 15/2/2021 at 10.00am

Please note this vacancy may close early if we feel we have enough suitable applicants.

Interviews will be held on 24/2/2021

Ablewell Advice Walsall, The Central Hall, Ablewell Street, Walsall WS1 2EQ
www.ablewelladvice.org.uk F: AblewellAdvice T: @Ablewell_Advice

Person Specification:

Senior Adviser (money advice and welfare benefits)

<u>Attributes</u>	<u>Essential</u>	<u>Desirable</u>	<u>Method of Assessment</u>
Education and Training	Able to communicate effectively in writing and verbally		A, I
	Good numeracy skills		A, Q
	Member of the Institute of Money Advisers, or willing to become one if appointed to the post.	Qualification relevant to advice work (e.g.- Citizens Advice certificate, MIMA cert, NVQ etc)	A, I, Q
	Commitment to maintain and update knowledge in relation to changes to debt/welfare benefit legislation and practice		A,I
Experience	At least 2 years recent experience of delivering debt and benefit casework within an advice agency or similar.	Currently registered as an Authorised Intermediary for the submission of Debt Relief Orders	A, I
	Experience of managing a caseload independently.	Experience of supervising/supporting trainees	A,!
Computer skills	Able to use Microsoft Word, Access, Excel and Outlook. Able to manage an online calendar.		A
Personal qualities	Self-motivated and proactive		A, I
	Able to work without direct supervision		A, I
	Able to work effectively within a small team		A, I
	Able to produce reports and presentations		A, I
	Willingness to understand and engage with Methodism and be subject to its discipline		A, I
Special qualities or Aptitudes	Able to relate effectively to a wide spectrum of ages, backgrounds and ethnicities		A, I
Any other requirements	Satisfactory Enhanced Disclosure from the Disclosure and Barring Service		DBS application

A- Application form, I – interview, E – exercise, Q – proof of qualification, R - reference

Job description

Job Title: Senior Adviser

Location: Ablewell Advice Walsall, The Central Hall, Ablewell Street, Walsall WS1 2EQ

Purpose: To provide a welfare benefits and money advice casework service to Walsall residents.

Reports to: Project Manager/ Management Committee

Duties and responsibilities:

1. To provide specialist advice about debt and welfare benefit issues. This may be face-to-face, by telephone, via video call or through email, depending on the needs of the project.
2. To provide advice to from our Ablewell Street office and from other locations as agreed. This may include on-site advice at our partner schools or home visits to clients.
3. To manage a caseload of debt and welfare benefit clients independently, taking a proactive approach to case management and ensuring cases are actively progressed.
4. To keep accurate computerised case records (we use AdvicePro software), ensuring that cases are managed proactively, and outcomes are identified.
5. To oversee the delivery of our advice in schools project, working with our partner schools to deliver debt and benefit advice to parents. To report to the management committee and funder (Walsall Council) on progress with this project and to ensure the project meets its outcomes.
6. To support our trainee adviser with her training needs and ongoing development.
7. To act as a resource for colleagues in respect of debt and benefit queries.
8. To work with the Project Manager to identify training and development needs on an ongoing basis.
9. To keep up to date with relevant changes in legislation and procedures, attending meetings where necessary.
10. To carry out administrative duties and other tasks associated with the smooth running of our overall service, for example administering food bank vouchers, publicity work etc.
11. To adhere to organisational policies in respect of confidentiality, equality and health and safety.

Special conditions:

This post is subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.

In the absence of other staff there will be responsibility for the security of the premises.

It is expected that staff delivering money advice will be willing to become a member of the Institute of Money Advisers. If this contract is extended beyond the initial fixed term, it is expected that the successful candidate would seek to complete the IMA Certificate in Money Advice Practice.

VISION, PURPOSE, AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The purpose of Ablewell Advice Walsall was set out when the project began in 2012:

‘Helping overcome poverty in Walsall by providing free, independent, confidential and impartial advice about money and benefits through a service that is fully accessible by anyone’.

In April 2020 Ablewell celebrated eight years of service to the people of Walsall. The project began as a pilot scheme run by volunteers. After 6 months, the need for the service had been clearly proven and paid staff were employed. In 2018/19 the project helped over 450 individuals deal with almost £1 million of debt. We achieved financial success of £1.3 million in terms of increased benefits income.

Looking back over the life of the project, it has become clear that as we look to a vision for the future of the project, we need to ensure we hold fast to the things that make the project so distinctive and successful:

- The DNA of the project - its ‘person centred, holistic approach’ where each person is valued and cared for. This enables us to show the love of God and is key to all that we do.
- The service we offer is one adviser per client with the adviser working with the client on all their issues, seeking assistance where required. This has helped to build strong relationships.
- Working at the client’s pace with no time limits. This has helped our most vulnerable clients.
- The work of the project is underpinned with prayer and by a focus on the Methodist Church’s ‘Our Calling’ priorities

Our vision for 2020 onwards

We now want to build on the success of the project by expanding in three ways:

- Increasing the services we provide
- Increasing our partnerships and links with other organisations

- Raising awareness of the issues that people face to ensure we challenge injustice

Aims and objectives:

We are employing an 'asset-based community development' approach. It has been proven that there is an ongoing need for our services. We are now looking at how we can leverage our resources, skills and experiences to help to build a stronger community. We have identified ways we can do this:

1. Increasing the services we provide.

In addition to our core advice service based at the Ablewell Street office, we also have funding from Walsall Council to increase our advice provision in 'hard to reach' parts of the borough. We are achieving this through partnering with five local schools and providing advice directly to parents on the school site, increasing access to specialist help.

We have sought to expand our workshop provision to provide basic information about benefits, budgeting and Universal Credit to people who need it in Walsall. We have funding from Mid-Counties Co-operative Regional Communities Fund to deliver a range of workshops to empower individuals with the knowledge to help themselves.

From July 2020, we intend to employ a trainee adviser to initially provide basic advice that has in the past been provided on an ad hoc basis by volunteers. This more stable role will help us increase the capacity for advice at our Ablewell office.

2. Increasing our partnerships and links with other organisations

The landscape in the third sector is changing rapidly. In response to this our aim is to increase our partnerships and strengthen our links with other organisations in the public, private and third sector to leverage the resources we have. We have capacity in terms of underused facilities. The objective of increasing & developing links with other organisations is to increase the number of participants and deliver / facilitate services for and on behalf of other organisations.

Increasing and developing partnerships and links will be done by:

- Investigating the possibility of developing a network of debts centres with a Methodist ethos. We are currently funded by the Connexion to undertake preliminary work to determine the level of need nationally for such centres.
- Attending Walsall Welfare reform group meetings and playing an active part in developing good practice in this area.

- Our Project Manager is an 'active member' of Walsall Mid-Counties Co-operative, a role that enables us to link with other community service and to develop ongoing links locally.
 - Deepening relationships with existing referrers, including making links with the relevant departments / officers in the Local Authority once the Budget process has been completed
3. Raising awareness of the issues that people face to ensure we challenge injustice

As evidenced in reports from the Joint Public Issues Team and organisations such as Churches Action on Poverty, there is a need to raise public awareness of the issues that people are facing on a daily basis and this is one of our aims. Our objective is to do this in a number of ways:

- Via social media
- Giving talks to secular organisations e.g. Rotary, Lions, Towns Women's Guild, WI's, Probus
- Giving talks, leading worship within churches
- Writing articles for church newsletters

Conclusion

The purpose of Ablewell remains unchanged but our vision is to become a hub where people come for help, advice and to access training, in a welcoming environment, where the needs of the person are paramount. Ablewell will continue to be a good neighbour to people in need and through the work that it does, evidence the love of God and increase awareness of God's presence.

Application Form



APPLICATION FORM FOR AN APPOINTMENT WITHIN THE METHODIST CHURCH

CONFIDENTIAL

To be completed by the employing body prior to issue:

POST:	Senior Adviser – Money Advice and Welfare Benefits
METHODIST CHURCH/CIRCUIT:	Central Hall Methodist Church – Ablewell Advice Walsall
CIRCUIT No.	Walsall 28/04
DISTRICT:	Wolverhampton & Shrewsbury
PLEASE RETURN THE COMPLETED APPLICATION FORM TO:	Keely Gabriel, Project Manager Ablewell Advice Walsall, Ablewell Street, Walsall WS1 2EQ E-mail: keelygabriel@ablewelladvice.org Telephone: 01922 639 700
CLOSING DATE:	Monday 15/2/2021 at 10am

Please complete this application in black ink or black type

1. PERSONAL DETAILS

This will be held by the church, circuit or district before circulating the application form for shortlisting. Items marked with * must be completed.

Post applied for:

Senior Adviser

Where did you hear about the post

Title:

Surname: (Block letters)

First names:

Address: (Block letters)

Post Code:

Telephone number:

Home:

Daytime:

Mobile:

E-mail address:

WORK PERMIT* : Please be aware that under Section 8 of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996, it is a criminal offence to employ anyone who is not entitled to live or work in the United Kingdom. Applicants will be asked to provide proof of their employable status before the Methodist Council can confirm any offer of appointment e.g. Passport or birth certificate.

Are you a UK or EU/EEA Citizen? (Please tick)

Yes ☐

No ☐

If not, it is possible that you may not be eligible to work in the UK without a work permit.

Please indicate if you will require a work permit. (Please tick) Yes ☐

No ☐

If **“No”** please indicate the basis on which you are eligible to work in the UK.

Do you have any Criminal Convictions not “spent” under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please supply further details:

INFORMATION FOR APPLICANTS

Please read this information carefully before you complete the next part of the form.

- Thank you for expressing interest in this post.
- These notes are intended to help you complete the application form. Please read them carefully before you start to fill in the form.
- You should also have received a job description and person specification. These documents describe to you what the job will involve and what we need from the person who is appointed. Think carefully about the information in the job description and person specification, and consider what experience you have that would equip you for this post.
- We are inviting you to give us information that will allow us to assess how closely you meet the requirements of the person specification. You may draw on all aspects of your life: education, employment, voluntary work, church, interests, and home life, for example.
- Do not think you have to fill in all the space below each question. You may find you wish to answer one question more fully than another. You may use a separate sheet of paper if you need to write more than the form provides space for.
- Try to provide evidence or give examples of how you can meet the requirements of the job description and the person specification.
- Your personal information will be removed and will not be submitted to the interviewing panel.
- Our policy on references is that we cannot accept references from relatives or members of the family. At least one referee must be your line manager from your most recent employment.

Instructions to church, circuit or district: The first 3 pages of the application form should be removed before circulating the application form for shortlisting.

APPLICATION FORM

Applicant To Complete	
FULL NAME	
POST TITLE	Senior Adviser: Money Advice and Welfare Benefits
METHODIST CHURCH/CIRCUIT	Central Hall Methodist Church - Ablewell Advice Walsall
CIRCUIT NO.	Walsall 28/04
DISTRICT	Wolverhampton and Shrewsbury
CLOSING DATE	Monday 15/2/21 at 10am

For Office Use Only	
Date Received	
Application No	
Special needs at Interview	
Shortlisted	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Appointed	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

2. EMPLOYMENT HISTORY
 List all employers starting with your present or most recent first. Please account for any gaps in employment.

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 List all employers starting with your present or most recent first. Please account for any gaps in employment.

[illegible]

3. Why are you applying for this job?

4. What particular proven abilities, qualities and other attributes would you bring to the post?

5. How do you think you would do the job?

6. What qualifications do you have which are relevant to this post? Please give details – date, awarding body, grades etc.

7. Additional Information

You are welcome to give additional information, which may be written, in the space below.

8. REFERENCES

Please give the names, postal & email addresses, and telephone numbers of three referees who can broadly represent your professional work and personal interests. This should include your current or most recent employer, and may include your minister if relevant.

1.

Name:

Position:

Organisation
Name and Address:

Email:

Telephone:

2.

Name:

Position:

Organisation Name and Address:

Email:

Telephone:

3.

Name:

Position:

Organisation
Name and Address:

Email:

Telephone:

It is our practice to approach referees of shortlisted candidates only. If shortlisted, may we contact your referees?

9. I declare that the information contained in this form is true and accurate. I understand that if it is subsequently discovered that any statement is false or misleading, I may be dismissed from employment.

Signature:

Date: