



UNION
CHAPEL

ADVICE AND ENGAGEMENT WORKER APPLICATION PACK 2024



Background – Union Chapel - inspiring space, inspiring lives

Union Chapel is a unique multi award-winning performing arts venue, with a global reputation for international cultural events engaging diverse audiences. For over 30 years events have been our lifeblood and income, annually engaging 100,000+ visitors through 250 events.

“There’s something about coming to Union Chapel. There’s just something that’s kind of left in the walls. You feel it. There’s so much life in every corner. All of that seeps in, and it helps you to give your story” (Celeste)

Union Chapel is more than a venue. A Grade I listed Gothic architectural jewel, it is also home to charities tackling homelessness, championing social justice, empowering local communities with creative groups, training and employability programmes for local communities. It is also the home to a working, progressive and inclusive church.

Profits from events substantially support our vital charitable work with local communities and we are a model of good practice for community engagement. As an example, the Hospitality provided at our events directly supports our Margins charity and supported employment programme for people with experience of homelessness.

“I depend on Margins for more than hot food, they make me feel very happy, like a valid human being, a real person and not a non-entity, I feel like an individual.”

[The Margins Project](#), Union Chapel's Frontline charity, is recruiting an Advice and Engagement Worker. Margins work with people who are homeless or who are at risk of homelessness and helps address pertinent social justice issues these communities face. The charity runs three integrated programmes:

- a community drop-in programme providing access to nutritious hot meals, and limited access to showers & laundry services.
- advice and engagement programme providing one-to-one as well as group advice service on benefits and housing, and onward referrals to pertinent services.
- support employment programme offers a paid catering training to 10 people who have had experience of homelessness, substance misuse, mental ill-health, and or imprisonment.

Our range of services are designed to help guests (service users) at varying stages, from having no roof over their head to getting back into employment.



This role offers an opportunity for an experienced adviser to help shape and evolve Margins services. Experiences on the ground at the drop-in programme inform the charity's strategic direction. The role will involve expanding our partner network to link into pertinent statutory and other charitable organisations that provide services that will help our guests with their housing, substance misuse, recidivism, and mental health challenges.

We work closely with people on an individual case work basis to get guests off the streets, into hostels or temporary accommodation where possible, and work with private and social landlords on a range of issues. We support and represent the people we work with on the phone and in person, including at the council, the doctors, the job centre, and benefits tribunals.

Our drop-ins run on Mondays and Wednesdays 11:00am to 1:00p.m. where attendance is currently from 65 to 75 guests. The advice and engagement worker works more intensively with smaller numbers of up to 20. The demand for more follow up work and advocacy support has been increasing over the last two years and this in-house advice worker is critical for this demand.

Working collaboratively with the Drop-in Community worker (currently vacant), the head chef, and a small group of dedicated volunteers, you will be responsible for the support of a caseload of guests, some with complex needs, and will undertake key work responsibilities including registering the guests, identifying their housing, benefit and personal needs and conducting all necessary follow ups including occasional advocacy support, where deemed necessary.

We are a small, dedicated team that works collaboratively to achieve the best outcomes for our guests and are seeking an enthusiastic, adaptable team player with experience in this field to join us. Full Job Description is below. If you are interested in this role, please send a CV of not more than two pages of A4, and a supporting statement addressing all points in the job specification to recruitment@unionchapel.org.uk. **The closing date is Tuesday 30 April 2024 and Interviews will be held in the w/c 13 May 2024.** Successful applicant will be required to obtain Enhanced DBS Clearance.

Job Title: ADVICE AND ENGAGEMENT WORKER

Responsible to: Head of Margins

Location: Margins Offices at Union Chapel, Islington, London

Salary: £32,500 - £35,000

Terms: Full time 37.5 hours per week with 1 hour unpaid for lunch.
Three-month probation, two months' notice.
23 days annual leave + bank holidays. Workplace pension scheme (NEST)

Start date: May 2024

Purpose of Job:

- To advise and assist guests (service users) with benefit claims and related issues, e.g., Housing Benefit, DLA, PIP, Income Support, ESA, Universal Credit, and other benefits. In particular, assisting them to claim Housing Benefit and UC to reduce risk of rent arrears.
- To develop significant contact and liaison with comparable housing and benefits advice organisations.
- To encourage guests engage with Margins activities, and where practicable, with the wider Union Chapel activities.
- To develop, facilitate and deliver group advice workshops/training programmes and open discussions forums to engage guests who historically do not engage with Union Chapel.
- To Refer Margins guests to relevant internal and external services.
- In liaison with the head of Margins and the chef to refer potential candidates to Margins' Supported Employment Programme.

The Advice and Engagement Worker will have an active role in identifying and engaging guests as well as referring potential candidates to the Supported Employment Programme, a programme anticipated to expand beyond its current services in Margins catering.

Responsible For:

- Working with caseload of guests
- With the support of drop-in services community worker (currently vacant) to ensure the smooth running of the drop-in services
- Identifying opportunities to improve services both at a project and organisational level.
- Assist the Head of Margins in ensuring that the Margins Project remains GDPR compliant.
- Represent the organisation effectively internally and externally.
- Working in partnership with statutory and other charities to deliver co-ordinated support to guests.
- Identify relevant training opportunities in capacity building.
- Initial liaison with and acting as the first referral contact for the Supported Employment Programme

Key Duties:

- To encourage and assist guests achieve the maximum income from benefits to which they are entitled to, and to refer to relevant support services such as mental health, social services, community support.
- To advise guests on basic budgeting and where applicable to refer to Tenancy Support Officers or outside agencies for more complex help.
- To liaise closely with local authorities, social, and private landlords to try to achieve the best outcome for our guests.
- To identify if the guest is accessing the right benefit that will support their long-term wellbeing.
- To support newly arrived refugees with their housing and benefit advice needs.
- To actively assist guests with formal appeals against Local Authority, DWP and HMRC decisions regarding benefit entitlement. Representing at Appeal Tribunals.
- To signpost guests to resources that can assist them in finding work.
- When needed, signposting guests to specialist providers in mental health or drug and alcohol support services.
- To Support guests on paying their rent, including providing advice on benefits and debt management.
- To Address breaches of occupancy agreements and develop strategies that would prevent and avoid eviction.
- To assist guests with backdated claims for Benefit by supporting their applications through to completion.
- To ensure all guests' files are up-to-date and that data is captured on our management system.
- To provide written reports and statistics as and when requested.
- To attend supervision, training, and meetings as and when required.
- To provide advocacy support to guests as and when required.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Essential:

- Good knowledge of the benefits system, including Universal Credit.
- Experience of working with homeless and marginalised people and understanding of the issues that face them.
- Experience of working or collaborating with people with mental health issues.
- Experience of working with refugees and their needs.
- Ability to manage challenging behaviours.
- Embrace a strength-based approach.
- A clear understanding of professional boundaries.
- A knowledge of the best practice in Safeguarding Adult procedures.
- Excellent written and oral communication skill.
- Ability to work proactively as part of a team.
- Ability to plan, manage and action follow-ups on time and manage and contain workload.
- Proficient in IT skills and competence in Microsoft Office applications.

- Committed to personal and professional development through ongoing training.

Desirable:

- Minimum of 3 years' experience of providing advice to vulnerable groups
- Experience of delivering provision for the benefit of vulnerable backgrounds

Equal Opportunities:

- Ensure consistent and effective implementation of Union Chapel Equal Opportunities & Diversity policy and procedures.
- Positively promote an environment which respects and values the diversity of staff, volunteers, and Guests.

This is a guide to the nature of the work required of the Advice and Engagement Worker. It is therefore not comprehensive or restrictive and may be reviewed with the postholder and the line manager from time to time. The post holder may undertake any other reasonable duties within the capabilities and scope of the post as specified by their line manager. In such circumstances appropriate training will be provided.

How to apply

Please apply with your CV and a support statement, both no more than two pages, outlining your skills and experiences to meet the criteria of the role, why you want to work for Union Chapel Project and your availability to start to recruitment@unionchapel.org.uk with "Advice and Engagement Worker" in the subject line.

Closing date: Tuesday 30 April 2024, 8am

Interviews will take place w/c 13 May 2024

Equality and Diversity

We are working to become an organisation that is representative of our local community and want to recruit people from a range of backgrounds who reflect the diversity of our community. We particularly encourage applicants who are currently underrepresented in our board, workforce and wider sector. This includes but is not limited to candidates who identify as being from Black, Asian and other ethnic backgrounds from the global majority, and candidates who identify as being disabled. We also particularly welcome applicants with their own lived experiences of the challenges we aim to address.

Please complete our [Equal Opportunity Monitoring form](#) and email it to recruitment@unionchapel.org.uk. It will be treated in confidence and will not be seen by the staff directly involved in the appointment.



Photo Credits:

Front page:

Live At The Chapel by James Bridle

Last page:

Ed Gamble by James Bridle

Seckou Keita by Tatiana Gorilovsky

Community Leaders by Michael Chandler

The Margins Project Chef Iraj



Shortlisted
Organisation

Awarded by
CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN
FOUNDATION
UK/USA



Shortlisted
Best
Loved