

# CMA Services & Fees

## INTRODUCTION

Community Money Advice (CMA) is a service provider. Our customers are community-based organisations operating under their own constitution and governance. These community groups provide unconditional, confidential, free, face-to-face advice, or support to access that advice, to individuals and families in their community. By affiliating with CMA, the local group (from here on called a 'Centre'), gains access to a range of services for given fees, as detailed below. These services cover helping the Centre to establish a service and ongoing support when the service is open to the public. CMA provides comprehensive information on the services and operating models for enquirers interested in CMA affiliation, and the full range of services becomes available to the Centre from when they submit their affiliation application and fee.

## CMA FEE REVIEWS

Fees are reviewed by Directors and Trustees annually. Changes are communicated to all CMA affiliate centres with a commitment to giving a minimum of three months' notice of any resulting fee rises.

## ADVICE SERVICE OPTIONS

Debt Advice work includes regulated activity which requires authorisation from the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). This requirement delineates CMA's two operating models:

**CMA Connect Centre:** FCA Authorisation *not* required

**CMA Debt Advice Centre:** FCA Authorisation required

As noted below, all new CMA affiliates start as a Connect Centre but can choose to transition to a Debt Advice Centre after gaining a minimum of nine months experience operating the Connect model.

## CMA CONNECT CENTRE

**All new CMA affiliate centres start as Connect Centres.** This model allows the centre to help clients without needing FCA authorisation, gaining experience of: the debt advice sector; managing a service; the non-regulated elements of giving debt and money advice; seeing how regulated debt advice is managed through the team's working relationship with the CMA Hub Advisers, who handle the FCA regulated elements of debt advice work.

*N.B. Connect can be a centre's permanent operating model or, after a minimum of nine months working as a Connect Centre (CC), there is **the option** to transition to being a Debt Advice Centre (DAC) within which all elements of the work including regulated advice are managed in house by the centre's team. To make that*

transition requires applying for and gaining FCA authorisation to undertake regulated debt advice, and the training of team members as Debt Advisers (see CMA Debt Advice Centre, below). Making this change is also subject to CMA Hub sign-off of the quality of Money Mentors' casework, and CMA Operations sign-off of management standards, to ensure the standard required under FCA regulation for a DAC will be met.

Connect Centre's staff are trained as Money Mentors, and their work with clients comprises:

- Face to face contact and support
- Teaching clients how to manage a household budget
- Gathering and collating a client's financial information
- Referring that information on to a CMA Hub Debt Adviser (to manage the regulated debt advice).

To establish and run a CMA Connect Centre that service must:

- Put in place CMA's policies, procedures and operational framework for the service
- Have staff trained as Money Mentors
- Comply with CMA affiliation requirements, including CMA branding

A strong working partnership between a Money Mentor and their allocated Hub Debt Adviser is underpinned by their both seeing and sharing the client case records in Catalyst (CMA's bespoke, cloud based, case-management software: see below under 'Services'); and regular communication between Money Mentor, Hub Adviser, and Client is managed by phone, post, email, text, WhatsApp, and video-conferencing.

## FEES FOR A CMA CONNECT CENTRE

### YEAR ONE

**£2500** This Joining Fee includes all CMA services and the first 10 cases referred to a Hub Debt Adviser

### YEAR TWO ONWARD

**£1250** Annual Service Fee. This fee **does not** include any client case fees

### CLIENT CASE FEES

**£65** Per case fee. In year one, this applies to cases additional to the 10 included in the Joining Fee, From year two onward, it applies to *all* client cases referred to the Hub

*N.B. Client cases subject to the £65 fee are logged for future invoicing at the point when the case is allocated to a CMA Hub Debt Adviser.*

As noted above, a CMA Connect Centre commits to all staff wanting to be Money Mentors attending CMA's one and a half day Money Mentor Training Course.

Cost: **£95**

## CMA DEBT ADVICE CENTRE

If, after a minimum of nine months operating as a Connect Centre, a CMA affiliate wishes to transition to become a CMA Debt Advice Centre, they will need to apply for and gain FCA authorisation to undertake regulated debt advice; have their Casework as a Connect Centre signed-off by the CMA Hub; their management practice signed-off by CMA Operations; and have their Money Mentors undertake further training to become Debt Advisers. CMA provides full guidance on taking this step, including policy & procedure templates and guide documentation. CMA's Operations Support Managers (see 'Services', below) also provide both face to face and remote support, as required, to support a centre in making this transition.

A CMA Debt Advice Centre provides a full end-to-end debt advice service 'in house' for clients. In brief summary this includes:

- Face to face contact and support
- Teaching clients how to manage a household budget
- Gathering and collating a client's financial information
- **Authorised and Regulated Debt Advice**

To establish and run a CMA Debt Advice Centre that service must:

- Gain Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) authorisation to give debt advice
- Have staff trained as debt advisers by undertaking and passing CMA's Level 3 (advice level) training courses (as a minimum).
- In addition to Level 3 training, one or more advisers **must** commit to undertaking and passing CMA's Level 4 (Caseworker/Specialist) training courses and subsequently take responsibility for the oversight and review of the Centre's Level 3 trained advisers' casework. Until an adviser in the Centre has undertaken and passed Level 4 training, this oversight will be undertaken remotely by the CMA Hub advice team. (See 'Debt Advice Oversight', below).
- Manage client cases in compliance with the FCA Consumer Credit Sourcebook (known as CONC)
- Comply with CMA affiliation requirements, including CMA branding

### DEBT ADVICE OVERSIGHT (England, Wales and N.Ireland)

#### New Debt Advice Centres

FCA regulation and CMA affiliation require that all Level 3 (Advice level) trained advisers' casework is overseen by a Level 4 (Caseworker/Specialist) adviser. The Level 4 trained adviser is responsible for undertaking File Reviews of Level 3 advisers' cases to ensure that casework in the centre is managed to a consistently high standard in compliance with CONC & FCA Consumer Duty regulation.

As most new CMA affiliate Debt Advice Centres do not at first have a Level 4 (Caseworker/Specialist) adviser on their team, across the opening months of working with clients (typically to a maximum of one year), the oversight of the Centre's Level 3 (advice level) advisers is managed remotely by the CMA Hub advice team. How this works will be explained by the Centre's CMA Operations Support Manager (OSM) and CMA Hub management, and is also detailed in policy and procedure documentation.

## Established Debt Advice Centres

Level 4 (Caseworker/Specialist) debt adviser oversight of Level 3 advisers is **not** a requirement of Centres established prior to 1st June 2023, while CMA strongly recommends that Centres' advisers do undertake and pass Level 4 training.

The CMA Hub provides an optional oversight service for new advisers joining existing centres (also see under 'services', below).

## DEBT ADVICE OVERSIGHT (Scotland)

Level 4 adviser oversight is not applicable in Scotland. New advisers undertake a Scottish variant of Parts 1 & 2 of CMA's Level 3 (Advice) training after which they can manage Informal Debt Management Plans.

All Scottish formal debt solutions have to be managed by an Approved Money Adviser (AMA) or referred to an insolvency practitioner for insolvency solutions. Training via Matrics Learn to become an AMA is the next step for advisers' training after CMA's Level 3 Parts 1 & 2, and when passed and approved by the Accountant in Bankruptcy (AIB) the adviser can manage formal debt solutions, and becomes the 'equivalent' of a Level 4 (caseworker/specialist) debt adviser who will undertake the oversight of the Centre team's casework. Prior to that a Debt Advice Centre operates by referring formal debt solutions to:

- An AMA at the CMA Hub
- An external AMA
- An insolvency practitioner.

Prior to a new centre having an AMA, the centre's advisers will have their initial cases overseen by the Hub until they have managed and administered 3 contiguous cases to a high standard (CMA File Review criteria), and are then handed over to the Manager/Supervisor for oversight.

## Salvation Army CMA Affiliate Centres

To note that the Salvation Army, being authorised centrally by the Financial Conduct Authority, provide additional services to their centres, and in this context manage the oversight of advisers' casework.

## FEES FOR A CMA DEBT ADVICE CENTRE

**£1250** Annual Service Fee

*N.B. When a Connect Centre transitions to being a Debt Advice Centre, they simply cease paying the additional Per Case Fees for cases allocated to the CMA Hub (but see also Integration, below)*

As noted above, the CMA affiliate centre commits to all staff wanting to be debt advisers attending training to the equivalent of Advice Level, and/or Caseworker/Specialist, by completing CMA courses.

The cost of the CMA Training courses is as follows:

- **£75** for each full training day

## Satellites

CMA no longer promotes a satellite (or additional site) model for Debt Advice Centres. Existing DACs with satellites are contacted directly regarding any annual fee changes. Any other centres considering multi-site working must contact CMA (your OSM in the first instance) to discuss services and fees implications.

## INTEGRATION (DACs only)

**If you wish to instigate this option please discuss with your OSM**

A CMA Debt Advice Centre may wish to refer some cases to CMA Hub Debt Advisers, usually to help with managing high client demand and a heavy caseload. This can be effected by CMA activating a dual option facility within the centre's existing Catalyst account. This allows a trained Debt Adviser to set a case for either: 1) full debt advice 'in house', or 2) to be allocated to a CMA Hub Debt Adviser.

Having adopted the dual system the centre could also take on (and have trained by CMA) Money Mentors: though they could of course only use the Hub Advice referral option, not give debt advice themselves.

The cost of this 'dual service' is as follows, and can be activated by CMA in short order at any time:

**£100** One-off set-up and administration fee

**£65** Per case fee, for cases allocated to a CMA Hub Debt Adviser, invoiced six monthly in arrears

*N.B. Client case fees are logged for future invoicing at the point when the case is allocated to a CMA Hub Debt Adviser*

## MIGRATION (DAC to CC)

**If you wish to instigate this option please discuss with your OSM**

As well as a Connect Centre changing to a Debt Advice Centre, A Debt Advice Centre can change to a Connect Centre. This can be managed by adopting the dual system detailed in 'Integration' (and on the same terms) until all 'in-house advice' client cases are closed, then switching to the CMA Connect Centre model and Catalyst system variant. The centre must be Connect 'Hub advice only' (no 'in house' advice being given) before FCA authorisation is cancelled.

## CMA SERVICES

Most CMA services are all available to both Debt Advice Centres and Connect Centres, but for the latter some services are simpler or slightly different. In the following service outlines, the services for Debt Advice Centres are outlined first, followed by any Connect Centre variant.

### CMA Hub

New Debt Advice Centres are provided with a full casework oversight & support service until the centre has a trained Level 4 debt adviser (England, Wales, N. Ireland), or an AMA/signed-off advisers (Scotland), to take over that oversight responsibility. In addition, **any** Debt Advice Centre can request that the Hub provides oversight and support for new Level 3 trained advisers.

## CONNECT CENTRE

The Hub provides a full regulated debt advice service to Connect Centres and Integration Centres, as detailed above in this document.

### **Policy & Procedure**

Debt Advice Centres must comply with sector regulation defined by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). CMA provides guidance on application, a full range of template policy and procedures and advice on how to implement procedures and client case management in compliance with FCA rules (CONC regulation). CMA also monitors and updates any changes in regulation on behalf of affiliate centres.

## CONNECT CENTRE

As a Connect Centre does not manage regulated debt advice (and cannot), FCA authorisation is not required. CMA provides a simpler but full range of template policies and procedures to underpin the service.

*CMA commits to continuous monitoring of sector legislation and regulation and to the provision of necessary template documentation and guidance on the implementation of updated regulation to all affiliates in advance of regulation implementation dates.*

### **Training**

The debt advice sector requires that debt advisers are trained to standard prior to advising clients and commit to ongoing skills development through additional training and on the job coaching. CMA offers some training courses on specific disciplines, additional to the Level 3 & 4 courses. During the centre set-up period trainee advisers are also required to undertake Listening Skills and Role Play workshops, in-house, employing materials provided by CMA. In addition, CMA affiliate centres have access to a range of online courses provided by Wiseradviser (England, Wales, N. Ireland), Matrics Learn (Scotland).

## CONNECT

Money Mentors do not require debt advice training, but are required to undertake the CMA Connect Money Mentor Training course and the 'in house' Listening Skills and Role Play workshops.

### **Training format**

CMA training can be undertaken in a face to face seminar format (our trainers travel to your location to deliver that training), or online via Zoom video conferencing - this is now the most popular CMA training option.

*CMA commits to monitoring and updating training materials in the light of sector best practice and regulation, employing short-term errata when necessary and producing new editions of training materials, typically every 24-36 months. CMA run a rolling programme of training courses, and can look to provide training on demand; when face to face at the most convenient time and location for trainees within the limits of the training team's resources.*

## **CATALYST**

CMA provides all Centres, as a part of the Joining Fee, access to CMA's bespoke case management software, Catalyst. The annual Service Fee entitles the affiliates to ongoing use for the full term of a Centre's affiliation. Catalyst is fully compliant with regulatory requirements, including GDPR & Consumer Duty. Cloud based, it is hosted by a secure professional hosting provider and subject to PEN testing. Catalyst also has a 'support request' facility. Enquiries through this route are managed either by CMA's IT department or handed on to CMA's IT developer, Practically iO, for technical support.

## **CONNECT**

Connect Centres and CMA Hub Debt Advisers also use Catalyst with an interface variant designed for the model.

*CMA commits to the continuous updating of Catalyst to ensure full compliance with regulation. CMA also provides an open channel for user feedback and development suggestions, which are then assessed and ratified by CMA's Catalyst Development Team (CDT), and as appropriate included in a rolling programme of incremental ergonomic improvements, subject to funding.*

*Regarding Support Requests, CMA endeavours to ensure a (max) 24-hour turnaround on responding to enquiries. Likewise, the resolution of technical issues, though they can be subject to complexities that take more than 24 hours to resolve.*

## **Adviceline**

CMA provides all affiliates with an advice service, either via a free 0800 number or email. This service is managed by CMA's Specialist Support Managers, offering advice for the affiliate's advice team (not clients) on casework management. It is open from 9.00 to 21.00 from Monday to Friday. Closed weekends, Bank Holidays, and across Christmas/NewYear.

*CMA commits to calls and emails being answered as promptly as possible, endeavouring to always respond within one working day maximum.*

## **CONNECT**

Money Mentors do not manage regulated debt advice; casework related questions form part of the working relationship with their CMA Hub Advisers and their OSM. So the telephone and email Adviceline services, although available to Money Mentors, are usually not required.

## **Insolvency Referral Services**

In England, Wales & N. Ireland, Debt Relief Orders (DRO) and Individual Voluntary Arrangements (IVA) are debt solutions that require implementation by approved bodies or insolvency practitioners. Scotland has its own debt solutions subject to similar requirements: Debt Arrangement Scheme (DAS); Sequestration; Minimal Asset Process (MAP); Trust Deed.

## **DRO referral service**

CMA is a 'DRO Competent Authority' which means that we can provide training to allow affiliate advisers to become authorised 'DRO Approved Intermediaries' and manage DROs with the Insolvency Service on behalf of their clients.

CMA also has a central team of DRO Approved Intermediaries (DRO AIs), managed by CMA's Competent Authority Representative. Centres without such a specialist can refer DRO cases to Specialist Support; a DRO AI will then liaise with the Insolvency Service on the Centre's behalf.

CMA reviews, updates, and communicates to Centres changes in DRO application criteria or procedure on a rolling basis.

*CMA endeavours to ensure the rapid implementation of the DRO application process to the Insolvency Service in the instance of cases referred to the central CMA DRO Intermediary team. Dependence on client circumstances, the provision of information from the Centre, and the response of the Insolvency Service, means that no specific timeframe can be defined.*

### IVA referral service

IVAs have to be administered by a licensed insolvency practitioner and CMA is able to recommend IVA providers to the Centre. Affiliates are also free to use their own choice of provider.

### SCOTLAND referral services

Debt Arrangement Scheme (DAS), Sequestration, and Minimal Asset Process (MAP) require an Approved Money Adviser (AMA), and Trust Deeds require a licensed insolvency practitioner. CMA can give Scottish advisers access to these services, or a centre can choose to source that advice locally.

### CONNECT

These services are accessed by CMA Hub Advisers, not by Money Mentors

### **Operations Team Support**

CMA provides personal support through Operations Support Managers (OSMs), with each Centre having a specific regionally based OSM. Their role is central and vital to CMA centre support and they are able to provide a range of services, including:

- Annual visit to audit FCA regulatory requirements and CMA affiliate operational standards
- File Reviews. N.B. When a centre has a Level 4 (caseworker/specialist) debt adviser, the OSM will review their casework & the file reviews they undertake as 'overseers' of their Level 3 trained team members. In Scotland OSMs review AMA casework or Manager/Supervisor casework where the centre has no AMA.
- Additional support visits (minimum of one per annum); which may be via Zoom video conferencing
- On request, training on Catalyst software
- Advice on all Centre management issues from best practice to succession and local marketing
- Phone, email and Zoom advice/contact

OSMs work to a number of key standards/expectations

- Annual audit of regulated and recommended policy and procedure management
- File Reviews assessing regulated and recommended casework standards (FCA CONC)
- Additional centre visits according to need/demand and the OSM's time capacity
- Catalyst training and management advice visits on request
- Phone and email contact. 24hr response, but allowing part time working, 24 hours might mean 'by the end of their next working day'
- Provision of visit reports to centres within 7 days maximum of the visit



## CONNECT

Connect Centres do not operate under FCA regulatory requirements, but must comply with CMA affiliate operational standards. They receive a minimum of one face to face visit per annum, and a Zoom video conferencing visit. However, additional visits can be organised when required by arrangement with your OSM. All other OSM services are the same.

### **Additional Services & Resources**

In addition to the above key services, CMA provides the following:

- Support regarding media contact and PR, including training
- CMA logo and branding guidelines for your centre
- Media representation, social media presence, and events, raising the CMA network's profile
- Website, including a 'centre resources' section with a broad range of information and guidance; and a webpage for your centre
- CMA engagement with sector working groups, providing a respected 'voice' into the debt advice sector
- Annual Conference (with discounted affiliate rates) including: notable keynote speakers; information/training seminars; networking and valuable social time
- Guidance on engaging with 'CMA Family' work (see 'Welcome to the CMA Family', below)

### **Customer Satisfaction**

CMA considers it vital to be providing services that effectively support our affiliates, and also to capture feedback to incorporate in future planning. To this end, CMA distributes an annual questionnaire, asking Centre Managers/Advisers/Money Mentors for (anonymous) feedback on all of CMA's key services. We also welcome rolling feedback. All constructive feedback is taken into CMA service planning as a part of a commitment to continuous improvement.

If an affiliate has concerns, is dissatisfied, or wishes to make a complaint about their affiliation, we would ask them to initially speak to their OSM or John Franks (C.O.O.). Affiliate centres can request a copy of CMA's complaints procedure at any time by contacting their OSM or emailing: [info@communitymoneyadvice.com](mailto:info@communitymoneyadvice.com)

We also appreciate positive feedback!

### **Welcome to the CMA Family**

Last, but certainly not least, CMA is committed to encouraging and facilitating a 'family' culture across our network of advice centres. We support CMA and affiliate staff who wish to engage with voluntary activities from networking with other affiliates to acting as ambassadors for CMA and centres, media work, input into debt advice sector policy work, and more. We can provide guides to undertaking such work to anyone interested: See the 'Welcome To The CMA Family' leaflet and contact [info@communitymoneyadvice.com](mailto:info@communitymoneyadvice.com) in the first instance.