



Moderator's Assignment Feedback – General Money and Debt Advice Principles and Practice

After each series, we ask our moderators to provide a report on each assignment-based unit to identify:

- any questions which were usually answered particularly well, including main points and qualities that characterised good answers.
- any questions which were usually answered badly and main weaknesses in candidates' answers.
- common errors or misconceptions made by candidates.

We hope that this will be of assistance when completing your General Money and Debt Advice assignment.

General feedback to candidates

Assignments were generally well answered.

Candidates who relied heavily on sourced text, such as internal training documents, gained fewer marks for this because they failed to demonstrate their own knowledge of the subject. Candidates are encouraged to reference external sources but to use these to answer the question in their own words.

Feedback for each assignment question

Part A Principles

Q1. Assess the extent and common causes of personal debt in the UK. Include the common myths associated with the consequences of personal debt in your answer

Q1 – Most answers evidenced good relevant research and provided relevant statistics to explain the extent of debt in the UK and demonstrated a good wider awareness of common causes of personal debt. Stronger answers related their response to relevant, topical issues facing client's in the current debt climate. Candidates should take care to ensure that common myths are thoroughly covered also to achieve the best marks.

Q2. Explain how and why it is important to establish the cause and extent of debt before you give advice. Consider appropriate strategies and techniques for doing so in your answer:

Q2 – A generally well answered question. There are several components to the question and candidates should take care to cover them all. Many candidates were able to give good reasons as to why the cause of debt is important and to explain the techniques they use to establish cause and extent. Some candidates needed to expand on the strategies used to explore these aspects of their client's situation in order to gain a comprehensive picture.

Q3. Explain the meaning of the terms 'priority' and 'non priority' debt, giving appropriate examples of each

Q3 – Strongest answers were able to give a clear definition of a non-priority debt and priority debts. Lots of good examples were provided to back up explanations. The highest marks were awarded to those able to explain their reasoning in a succinct manner.

Q4. With reference to organisational policy, where relevant, explain how to handle an initial debt advice enquiry to help your clients decide whether to use your service, including:

- **Details of any information which you would provide.**
- **Advice on potential conflicts of interest and confidentiality.**
- **Reference to equal opportunities and discrimination issues where appropriate.**

Q4 – Many candidates were able to cover the first part of the question well. But many then failed to explore the next sections in sufficient detail.

Limited references were made to equal opportunities policy, e.g. provision of information in different languages/formats or help for clients with mobility or vulnerability issues. Advice on potential conflicts of interest and confidentiality was also not generally explored thoroughly

Q5. Explain the importance of maintaining contact with creditors when experiencing financial difficulties

Q5 – Generally well answered with most candidates covering the key points, demonstrating good wider awareness around the reasoning explained.

Q6. Explain the key components of an effective personal budget. Include in your answer an explanation of why client expenditure may sometimes be below or above average

Q6 – Most answers considered only income and expenditure within their response as to the key components of a personal budget. Stronger answers also considered the household composition and impact of this along with other key information that is gathered at the same time.

A few candidates misinterpreted the second half of the question and gave examples of when clients may have high expenditure without giving reasons. Candidates should take care to consider situations which might result in high expenditure/low expenditure where this is well justified. Additional consideration of why client expenditure could be low would also be useful – many candidates only discussed clients underestimating their expenditure.

Q7. Assess potential ways that clients may be able to

- a) Maximise their income**
- b) Reduce their expenditure**

Q7 - More marks were awarded where the candidate showed understanding of the wider context by considering the impact of changes on the client.

The best answers covered how to go about gaining a type of income increase or specially how to reduce expenditure areas by giving strong examples.

Q8. Explain potential liability issues in relation to personal debt and the importance of confirming your client's liability for debt when giving money and debt advice

Q8 – Several candidates missed the opportunity to explain why it is important to establish liability for debt, in a wider context, Candidates should consider what the implications of missing this opportunity may be for both the client and the impact of this on potential advice/solutions.

Strongest answers followed this up by covering each of the liability areas covered within the mark scheme in good detail, demonstrating a sound understanding. Several candidates covered the liability issues as a whole, as opposed to taking each on in turn and giving an explanation for each. And others didn't cover all the liability issues listed, often missing off misrepresentation and undue influence.

Q9. Briefly explain the meaning of the following documentation and what the consequence is of ignoring these emergency situations

- a) warrant of control
- b) warrant of control
- c) summons for possession
- d) warrant of possession
- e) liability order
- f) statutory demand
- g) disconnection notice
- h) controlled goods agreement

Q9 – On the whole this was a well answered question. Descriptions of the 'paperwork' were covered generally well. However candidates should take care to specifically state, in each case, what the consequence of ignoring the paperwork is, and therefore why this is an emergency.

Q10. Briefly explain the key debt solutions available to clients

Q10 – A generally well answered question. Most candidates covered a good list of commonly known examples. The strongest answers ensured they covered the basics of what each solution is/means for the client with an overview of their key features.

Section B Practice

This section of your assignment aims to demonstrate that you can deliver effective money and debt advice based on reflective practice.

Q11. Demonstrate how you have given different clients effective and appropriate money and debt advice. Include evidence of your dealings with 8 past clients and in each case:

- explain your general approach to the client's problems
- outline the information provided
- outline the content of various records, communications and contact with or on behalf of the client
- Summarise the outcome

Q11 – A range of standards within these answers. The strongest responses covered a variety of cases and advice and took care to explain the specifics of the advice offered to clients. Candidates should take care not to concentrate too much of their response on background information as marks are achieved through advice and approach explanations, with awareness of outcomes.

Q12. Identify, from the 8 cases above, a range of successful contacts and discuss the techniques or strategies that you used, which in your opinion contributed to a successful outcome

Q12 - Whilst most candidates were able to pick out successful calls, several missed the opportunity to reflect on what techniques/soft skills they had used which influence the success of the call. Candidates should take care to focus their response on this rather than including details of advice that would be better included in Q11.

Stronger answers specially referred back to cases provided in Q11 and explained why their techniques and approach were effective.

Q13. Working with your line manager but answering in your own words:

- a) Use a range of evidence to assess your overall performance in relation to general money and debt advice**
- b) Produce an action plan to address areas for development**

Refer to any organisational or legal requirements, where relevant

Q13 – A mixed standard of response. Most candidates were able to appraise their overall performance in role. Strongest answers gave a balanced view, covering specifics.

The strongest answers provided an action plan in part b with areas of development alongside how they intended to improve in each area, including how and when they intend to achieve these goals.

A few candidates either provided a limited action plan or no action plan at all. Candidates should be mindful that if they include 1-1s in their appendices they should back these up with supporting explanations/an action plan resulting from these.