



Press release

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Debt secrets of Britain's love-birds

Debt Advice Foundation has found shocking numbers of people are hiding their financial problems from loved-ones, with many love-birds finding themselves burdened with their partner's debts.

It may be the most romantic time of the year, but the charity is urging people to look past the hearts and roses, as its research* has found 47 per cent of people struggling with debt are keeping loved-ones in the dark about their financial problems.

Worryingly, 21 per cent claimed they had been burdened with their partners' debts – highlighting the importance of knowing each other's financial situation and not being blinded by love.

Debt is a growing problem and figures released last week by the Insolvency Service show that personal insolvency reached record levels in the UK last year, with 134,142 people becoming insolvent during 2009.

David Rodger, Managing Director of Debt Advice Foundation comments: "More people than ever before are struggling with debts and our research has shown that many are not telling anyone about their financial problems – not even their partner or spouse.

"Sometimes this is because they don't want to worry their loved-ones, others don't want to face-up to the reality of their situation. This can lead to spiralling debt, which can have a serious and detrimental effect on the household."

These are Debt Advice Foundation's tips for couples who want to avoid a debt-disaster:

1. **Keep personal bank accounts:** Set-up a joint account for household bills but keep your wages in personal bank accounts.
2. **Avoid joint credit cards:** Even if your partner spends the money, you will be jointly liable for the repayment of those debts.
3. **Read the small print:** You should seek legal advice to see what your joint and several liability is before committing to any finance agreements.
4. **Talk to your partner:** There is never a good time to bring up the fact that you have a debt problem, however, it is important to recognise that the problem will only get worse the longer you leave it. By telling your partner, not only will you feel like a weight has been lifted from your shoulders, it will also give you more options, as many debt solutions require full disclosure of household income and expenditure.

David continues: "Couples often have rose-tinted glasses in the early stages of a relationship, so it's important not to rush into joint arrangements and make sure that romance doesn't get in the way of you being financially savvy."

Those who need help with debt problems can visit www.debtadvicefoundation.org/help or call Debt Advice Foundation on 0800 2922077 for free advice and support.

* Results generated from an online survey conducted on Debt Advice Foundation's website during January/February 2010.

Ends

Further information:

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Editors Notes

About Debt Advice Foundation

- Debt Advice Foundation's telephone helpline service is available six days a week on 0800 2922077, lines are open from 8am-8pm Mon-Fri and 9am – 5pm on Saturdays.

- Debt Advice Foundation is a registered charity, with the following objectives:
 - Provide free, impartial and appropriate advice to people with unaffordable debt.
 - Help people with debt problems to gain free access to solutions that will help them.
 - Promote the education of young people in money management so as to reduce the likelihood they will mis-use debt later in their lives.
 - Undertake or fund research to understand why problem debt happens and its effect on individuals, families and the wider UK economy.
 - To use this evidence to become a force for beneficial change within the credit and debt solutions industry and to work with government to bring about legislative change to benefit UK consumers.
- Debt Advice Foundation features on the FSA (Financial Services Authority) consumer website – Money Made Clear (www.moneymadeclear.fsa.gov.uk) and Direct Gov (www.direct.gov.uk) as a source of free and impartial debt advice.