



Press Release

05 February 2010

Debt charity helps struggling UK consumers tackle debts online

In response to increasing numbers of personal insolvencies and concerns about the capacity of the Third Sector to cope with growing demand, national debt charity [Debt Advice Foundation](#), has launched a groundbreaking online initiative to help people regain control of their finances.

Debt Advice Foundation's [Debt Tools](#) section is unique in its holistic but uncomplicated approach to [debt advice](#) and analysis. The new section includes:

- Debt Analyser – which gives people the ability to calculate the true extent of their debt problems.
- Budget Planner - an interactive online budgeting tool.
- Money Management Guide – a practical guide covering the basics of money management.
- Benefit Entitlement checker – to enable the user to maximise their income
- Utility price comparison – to enable the user to reduce their expenditure
- Credit Score Checker – to enable the user to identify weaknesses or inconsistencies in their credit history that could be increasing the cost of insurance and mobile phone contracts.

David Rodger, Managing Director of Debt Advice Foundation explains: “Many people still find it embarrassing and stressful to pick up the phone and talk to a stranger about their debt problems. Others are simply not aware of how severe their problems are. Whilst online tools should never replace the need for one to one advice and support from a specialist Debt Advisor, these new tools are a great way for people that have previously been unable to access the advice and support they need to start to get to grips with their debt problem.”

David continues: "I hope that these new tools will allow those that have been struggling in silence to get a much clearer understanding of their financial situation and, if it they do need help, I hope the tools will give them the inspiration they need to go and ask for it."

Debt Advice Foundation's free Debt tools section is available at www.debtadvicefoundation.org/debt-tools.

Ends

Note: Image of David Rodger, Managing Director of Debt Advice Foundation is available on request.

Further information:

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Editors Notes

- There were 134,142 individual insolvencies in England and Wales in 2009, equating to approximately 1 in every 320 adults (or 0.31%) and an increase of 25.9% from 2008. The 134,142 insolvencies in 2009 comprised 74,670 bankruptcies (which were up 10.7% on 2008), 47,641 Individual Voluntary Arrangements (IVAs), (which were up 21.8% on 2008) and 11,831 Debt Relief Orders (DROs).

Source: The Insolvency Service, 5 February 2010.

<http://www.insolvency.gov.uk/otherinformation/statistics/201002/index.htm#tables>

Insolvency Service statistics show that there were 107,288 personal insolvency filings in the whole of 2006 – (previously the highest annual figure since records began)

<http://www.insolvency.gov.uk/otherinformation/statistics/historicdata/HDmenu.htm>

- National Audit Office, report: Business, Innovation and Skills: Helping over-indebted consumers. Published 4 February 2010: http://www.nao.org.uk/publications/0910/over-indebted_consumers.aspx

It states: In the recession, demand for support and advice has become greater than capacity.

Between July 2008 and July 2009 there was a 28 per cent increase in the number of people contacting advice providers and, in some instances, there is not the capacity to cope. A quarter of advice agencies are either refusing new clients or have a waiting period of over a month.

- Debt Advice Foundation's budgeting tool gives consumers an anonymous way to gain a clear understanding of their financial situation by calculating total income, living costs and credit commitments. This enables individuals to identify any surplus income or a deficit that could create a debt problem.

About Debt Advice Foundation

- Debt Advice Foundation's telephone helpline service is available six days a week on 0800 043 40 50, 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.

- Dennis Benson was appointed Chair of Debt Advice Foundation in August 2007. Dennis was previously Chairman of the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust from 2005 to 2007. He is also Chair of the Rosemere Cancer Foundation.