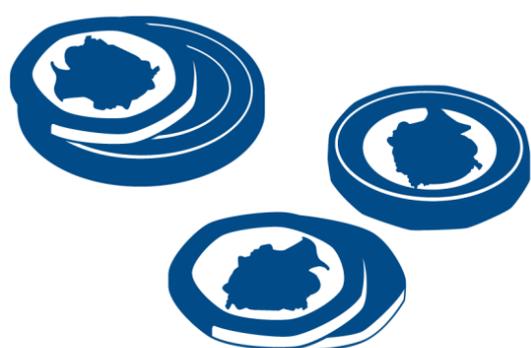


Coronavirus - the impact on people's finances

Many people in the UK face uncertainty as the coronavirus (COVID-19) situation develops, not least when it comes to their financial wellbeing.



We've already helped 824 people with coronavirus issues so far, but we've started to see a change in the types of clients we're receiving calls from, with more requests for advice coming from people who until now have been financially secure.

April is expected to show a similar rise as people face further weeks of financial pressures, particularly those who'd been laid off, self-employed, furloughed on reduced pay.

Rent

With people facing a sudden drop in income a growing number are struggling to meet housing costs particularly rent payments.

Case study

The client is a mature student and receives student loans. He was working 16 hours at a bar but due to the ban on pubs he currently has no work. He wanted to know if he could be entitled to benefits to help pay his rent.

How we can help

We are able to provide full benefits entitlement advice and ensure that people can navigate and access the new coronavirus financial and support initiatives. We are particularly raising awareness of the emergency legislation to suspend new evictions from social or private rented accommodation during the coronavirus crisis.

Maintaining mortgage repayments

We have seen an increase in the number of people requiring advice about paying their mortgage.

How we are helping

We are supporting people in speaking to their mortgage lenders before payments are missed to see if they can be offered the recently announced three month mortgage payment holiday. Your home shouldn't be repossessed because of coronavirus.

Council Tax

Many people don't realise that non payment of Council Tax is a priority debt. If payments are missed there can be serious consequences such financial crisis, court procedures, enforcement action and the risk of losing a home.

Your Council

All Local Authorities that we work with have confirmed help is available for those affected by coronavirus and are working hard to apply the new measures for Council Tax Support announced by Government.

How we can help

It is important to inform the Local Authority before payments are missed. We can work with the client to make sure the council is kept up to date with the client's current situation. We can then look to agree a mutually acceptable repayment plan.

Enforcement agents

We have confirmed with our Local Authorities that there are currently no home visits being conducted by enforcement agents. In addition, Derbyshire Dales, Erewash and High Peak Borough Councils have all confirmed they will be taking no recovery action until the end of June. Amber Valley have not set a time limit but indicate that it will be to the beginning of June at the earliest. If a client is experiencing any problems with regards to recovery action, we will continue to contact the councils to ensure we can affect a solution for every individual case.



Credit payment difficulties

Facing a sudden drop in income at a time when other potential debts are increasing can have a severe impact on the ability to meet credit payments. It is important to keep companies and creditors fully updated on the situation. We can help with repayment negotiations and encourage people to seek our advice before they start missing payments.

Case study

The client had taken out a Personal Contract Purchase agreement on a car four days ago but due to the coronavirus she has since lost her job. We are currently investigating if the 14 day cooling off period would apply.

Energy bills

We know people are facing financial pressures at the same time as having to spend more time at home. As a result they're becoming increasingly concerned about being able to pay their energy bills.



Case study

The client lives with her husband and baby in a mortgaged property. Due to the coronavirus, the client was unable to start the new position she had after her maternity had ended and her husband was about to be furloughed. We identified a new energy deal saving her £425 a year as well further savings on her water bill and energy savings around the house.

How we can help

If people are struggling to pay energy bills, we will assist them in speaking to their energy supplier as soon as they can. The supplier may well be able to set up a payment plan with them to help spread the cost of their bills. Suppliers will try to help find ways to keep the energy connected if someone can't top up their meter because of coronavirus. We will also work with people to identify the cheapest energy deal for them.

We encourage people to seek advice early. The sooner they contact us the sooner we can help find solutions.

We are committed to working within the community to provide pro-active and long-term support for our clients.

**Call our Adviceline on
0300 456 8390**

**Lines open Monday to Friday,
9am to 4pm.**

(Calls charged as 01 & 02 numbers)