



Press Release

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Continued rise in calls to debt charity's helpline highlights need for telephone counselling

Leading debt charity Consumer Credit Counselling Service (CCCS) has seen a sharp rise in calls to its helpline in the first three months of the year. Over 93,000 people called it for help with their debts in quarter one 2010. This compares to 69,432 for the same period in 2009. Receiving a record 335,323 calls to its helpline in 2009, CCCS says that it expects the number for 2010 to be even higher. The debt charity says it is able to deal with the continued rise in calls as it has increased its capacity in response to growing demand.

To ensure that everyone who needs advice and support with their debt problems receives help in a way that is best suited to them, CCCS supports the recent recommendation in the Public Accounts Committee report, *The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills: Helping over-indebted consumer*, that the Treasury allow the Department greater flexibility in the use of its funds for debt advice.

Currently, the Treasury does not permit funds it provides for face-to-face advice to be used for other, cheaper, forms of advice, even though they are preferred by some users. The report recommends that it evaluate urgently the potential for other forms of advice to deliver help to more consumers than it can currently reach.

Delroy Corinaldi, CCCS External Affairs Director comments: "The UK's personal debt pain continues, and this is even before the imminent public spending cuts, so it is crucial that those who find themselves in this situation have access to free, impartial and independent advice in whichever way is best for them: online, face-to-face or over the phone."

The CCCS helpline is open 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday, on 0800 138 1111 or at anytime online from www.cccs.co.uk .There is no charge for any of its services.

-Ends-

Notes to editors:

1. The CCCS free phone helpline 0800 138 1111 is open 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday.
2. CCCS operates *Debt Remedy*, an online counselling service available round the clock at www.cccs.co.uk for those who prefer an anonymous option.
3. CCCS's ethos is to help the "can't pays", not the "won't pays", and does not condone debt avoidance. CCCS always aims to help its clients pay back what they owe, in a realistic timescale and manner that is suited to each individual's situation.
4. CCCS is self-funding. Lenders share with the charity the benefit they receive from its operation, making a donation from the money repaid to them. This allows CCCS to retain its independence and ensure that its advice is always in the best interest of the client. CCCS aims to separate the "can't pays" from the "won't pays".
5. The Public Accounts Committee report, *The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills: Helping over-indebted consumers*, is available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200910/cmselect/cmpubacc/475/475.pdf>

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