

Helping to overcome problem debt

The challenge ahead

New challenges New solutions

Our strategy

As the debt landscape changes and client needs evolve, we plan to react to the emerging issues that people in financial difficulty face, by extending and improving the work we do and ensuring we are fit for the future.

Our new three year strategy (2015 – 2017) builds both on our current strengths and anticipates a changing social and economic environment.

Our strategic priorities are to:

- develop new products and services, which will allow the charity to:
 - help more people who are in, and at risk of, problem debt
 - help people with more of the debts they have
 - resolve a bigger share of debts by getting more people into solutions
- prevent people falling into problem debt by using our clients' experiences and stories to shape law, regulation and practices to protect people when they are vulnerable
- improve our systems infrastructure, investing to ensure that our service to people in problem debt becomes even more efficient and effective.

For over 20 years, we have been helping people in financial difficulty to become debt free. As we implement our new three year strategy, we aim to transform the futures of even more people in our society who are in, or at risk of, problem debt. With the support of our partners and stakeholders, we can make a difference to so many lives.



How we are helping people to overcome problem debt

Our vision

We want to create a society free from problem debt.

Problem debt is not just a problem for individuals. It damages families and communities and leads to wider social costs in excess of £8 billion each year.

By helping individuals in debt, helping them to get back on their feet, and by campaigning for policies that will help avoid problem debt, we will help to overcome the problems that debt creates for our society in the 21st century.

Our objectives

As the UK's largest debt advice charity, with over 1,200 staff and with offices in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, we are at the forefront of providing advice and solutions that change people's lives. Our core objectives are to:

- provide and create greater awareness of free debt advice and solutions
- champion the cause of people who are in, or at risk of, problem debt by influencing public and private policymakers and campaigning for change
- enhance people's financial understanding and capability so that they can better manage their money and debts, and recover from problem debt.

Who we work with

Over 850 organisations work with us and recommend us to people in need. Every minute, a client is recommended to us because our partners recognise that they need our help. Over half of the people who seek our help are recommended by one of our partners.

Over the last 20 years, our relationships have grown significantly. We now work with all the major banks as well as many small lenders and also with major retailers, healthcare professionals, local authorities, housing associations and large employers.

Partner organisations such as Shelter, Age UK, Samaritans and Macmillan recognise the significance of people's money problems and the connections with physical and mental health.

Faced with increasing numbers of clients who can't pay their household bills, utility companies are referring more and more of their customers to us.

Shelter

ageUK

SAMARITANS

**WE ARE
MACMILLAN.
CANCER SUPPORT**



The products and services we offer

StepChange Debt Charity has been helping people in financial distress for over 20 years. We have pioneered many of the services and solutions that have shaped debt management in the UK, from developing the Debt Management Plan to the introduction in 2013 of the managed Token Payment Plan (helping people with minimal repayment ability, but with the potential for financial improvement in the future).

We're with our clients every step of the journey, offering advice based on their individual circumstances, developing practical plans, dealing with creditors and arranging payments, so that eventually they can take back control of their finances.

As a charity, our advice is always free. This is made possible by the charitable contributions that creditors make to us.

For many people, just talking to us or taking advice from our unique website tool, Debt Remedy www.stepchange.org/debtremedy, can help to resolve their problem. For some, budgeting advice and support is all they need to help them get their life back on track.

We now have £4.2 billion of debt under management, up from £3 billion in 2008. In 2014, we supported our clients in paying circa £370 million off their debts (up from £223 million in 2008) in addition to arranging various forms of personal insolvency for people who could not repay their debts.

In 2015 we will continue to evolve our products and services to meet the changing needs of people in problem debt.

How we are helping people to overcome problem debt

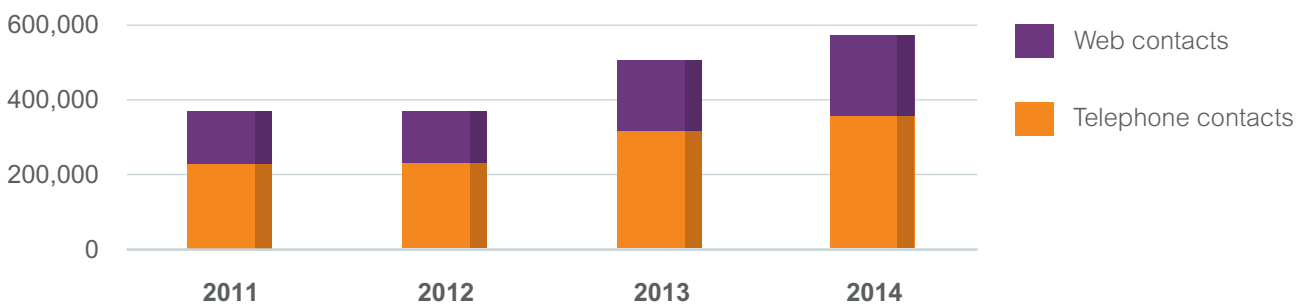
Our progress

Our key focus over the last few years has been to help more people. This is still a priority. We have invested in raising awareness of the charity and free debt advice, reaching out to more people who need help, encouraging them to make contact with us and receive advice on the best solution for their circumstances. Significant progress has been made.

Visits to our website have increased

1.5 million in 2011
to
2.9 million
in 2014

Growth in contacts



From 2011 – 2014, the number of people contacting us on the telephone has increased by 40%, with web contacts (people accessing our online debt advice tool or 60-second debt checker) up by 83%.

In response to more people seeking our help, we have increased the number of recommendations we make by 75% since 2011. We have also broadened the range of solutions we offer. Our managed Token Payment Plans accounted for 8% of our recommendations in 2014 from a zero base in 2013. The largest area of growth (154% since 2011) has been in Debt Relief Orders (DROs). A DRO is an insolvency solution designed to help people with lower levels of debt, income and assets. We now provide one in five of all DROs across England and Wales. We have extended the support provided to our Scottish clients by applying for Debt Payment Plans (DPPs), under the Debt Arrangement Scheme. Since gaining accreditation in 2013, we have made 789 applications on our clients' behalf. (DPPs are available in Scotland and are provided by StepChange Debt Charity Scotland.)

Our interventions have helped to transform the lives of millions. But we want to help more. Many more. And with your help, we know we can. For more information visit www.stepchange.org

Foundation for Credit Counselling, trading as StepChange Debt Charity, is a charity registered in England and Wales (1016630) and a company limited by guarantee (2757055). It is governed by a Board of Trustees, who meets regularly throughout the year. The Board oversees governance of the charity and is responsible for setting the charity's strategic direction and ensuring that it achieves its objectives.

Authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.

Consumer Credit Counselling Service (Scotland), trading as StepChange Debt Charity Scotland, is a charity registered in Scotland (SC024413) and a company limited by guarantee (SC162719). It has a separate Board of Trustees.

StepChange Debt Charity is funded by voluntary donations from lenders who support the work of the charity. All of the money repaid by StepChange Debt Charity clients on Debt Management Plans is used to repay their debt. This allows StepChange Debt Charity to retain its independence and ensure that its advice is always in the best interest of the client.