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November 11 2010

Press Release

Leading debt charity shows concern for proposed welfare reforms

CCCS (Consumer Credit Counselling Service), the UK's leading debt charity warns that the government's proposed welfare shake-up does not go far enough to help those families who are losing out on unclaimed benefits every year and is more focussed on the so-called "benefits scroungers".

The CCCS Centre for Welfare Benefits helps people in debt with a potential benefits shortfall. It finds that on average families are losing out on £80 per family per week in unclaimed benefits, an annualised £4,000 per family. The total UK unclaimed benefit is an estimated £16bn a year.

The top ten most important benefits for people in debt according to CCCS are:

- Housing benefit
- Child tax credit
- Pension credit
- Local housing allowance
- Council tax benefit
- Jobseekers' Allowance
- Employment support allowance
- Working tax credit
- Mortgage interest relief
- Disability Living Allowance

The UK's top-ten most costly benefits are: (source: bbc.co.uk/news)

- Tax credit
- Housing benefit
- Child benefit
- Disability Living Allowance
- Income Support
- Incapacity Benefit
- Jobseeker's Allowance
- Council Tax Benefit
- Statutory Maternity Pay
- Carer's Allowance

CCCS Chairman, Malcolm Hurlston said: “The coalition's plans are well intentioned but there are probably more deserving people under-claiming than there are so-called ‘benefit scroungers’.

“Our centre for welfare benefits, based in Nottingham, finds that many genuine people in debt, trying their best to repay, are under-claiming benefits by £4,000 per family a year.

“Economic recovery requires genuine potential claimants to be better identified and helped.”

- Ends -

Notes to editors:

1. The CCCS free phone helpline 0800 138 1111 is open 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday.
2. *CCCS Debt Remedy* is available at www.cccs.co.uk .
3. CCCS is self-funding. Unsecured lenders share with the charity the benefit they receive from its operation, making a donation from the money repaid to them through debt management plans. 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 pay” from the “won’t pay”.

Media enquiries:

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