

## **Press Release**

2 October 2012

### **Problem credit card debt in decline**

National debt charity Consumer Credit Counselling Service (CCCS) is seeing a marked decline in problem credit card debt. The number of people seeking its help with their credit card debt is decreasing, going down from the peak of 170,363 in 2009 to 161,451 in 2010, and 149,475 in 2011.

While 76,368 people have sought its help with their credit card debt in the first half of 2012, this is a decline on 80,971 for the first half of 2011, and 85,315 for the first half of 2010.

However, the level at which credit card debt becomes problematic has dropped, with the average credit card debt for those seeking CCCS's help going down by almost three thousand pounds, from £13,196 in 2009 to £10,517 in 2012.

The average number of credit cards for a CCCS client has also gone down, from 3.3 in 2007 to 2.8 in 2012.

Commenting on the findings, Delroy Corinaldi, CCCS external affairs director said: "Problem credit card debt is on the decline, which may be the result of people paying down their debt, less access to this type of credit or a combination of both.

"Whatever the reason, while fewer people are struggling with credit card debt, lower levels of credit card debt are becoming problematic.

“This highlights the impact of the economic downturn on household budgets, how people are struggling to keep up with their debt repayments despite having less credit card debt to manage.”

Craig Jones of The UK Cards Association, the trade body for card issuers, added:  
“Responsible lending is at the heart of the credit card industry’s service to its customers. It’s brought into even greater focus because we know customers are under pressure, due to the current economic climate, and because it’s never in lenders’ interests to lend to customers who will not be able to repay.

“Our members operate sophisticated systems to ensure they can identify customers who may be at risk of falling into unmanageable debt, following which they will intervene at an early stage to provide support. However, we are not complacent and will keep working to strike the appropriate balance between ensuring access to credit, while also supporting customers who are at risk of debt problems.”

- ends -

**Notes to editors:**

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. The CCCS free phone helpline 0800 138 1111 is open 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday.
4. CCCS *Debt Remedy* is available at [www.cccs.co.uk](http://www.cccs.co.uk)
5. Follow us on Twitter: @CCCSPressOffice

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