



# Debt advice success stories

Why client case studies matter, recent examples and a guide to creating your own



# What this guide is for

## 1. Why success stories matter

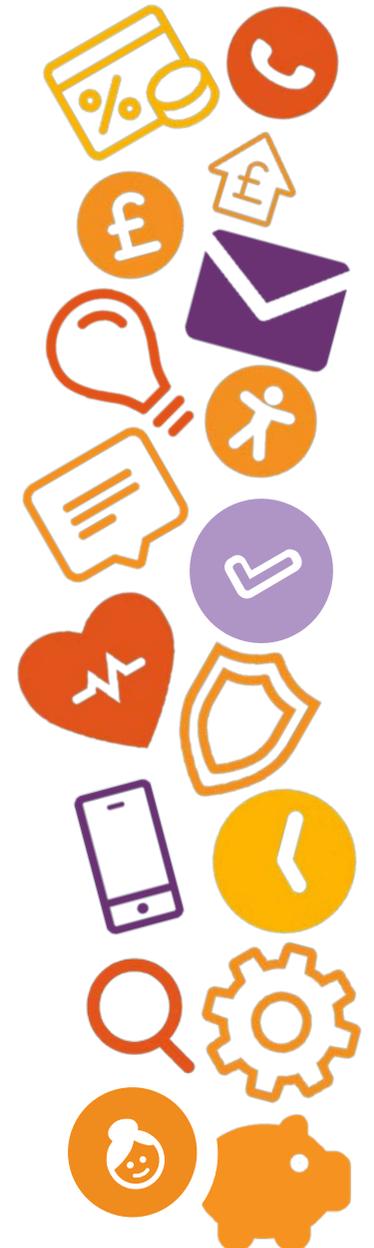
It can take a long time for someone in problem debt to finally engage with debt advice, **discover a typical journey and how success stories help people engage sooner**

## 2. Recent success stories

Here's some we made earlier: **a selection of debt advice success stories**

## 3. Create your own

Case studies are a great way to build trust with your customer in your communications – **learn how to create your own debt advice case studies**





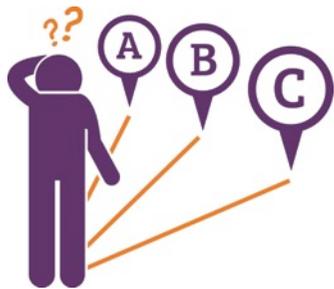
# 1. The client journey to debt advice



# Why success stories matter

## Case studies help customers engage with advice

We know that it can sometimes take our clients over a year to seek the help they need



They may feel **ashamed** or **anxious** or may be unaware that free and impartial debt advice is available



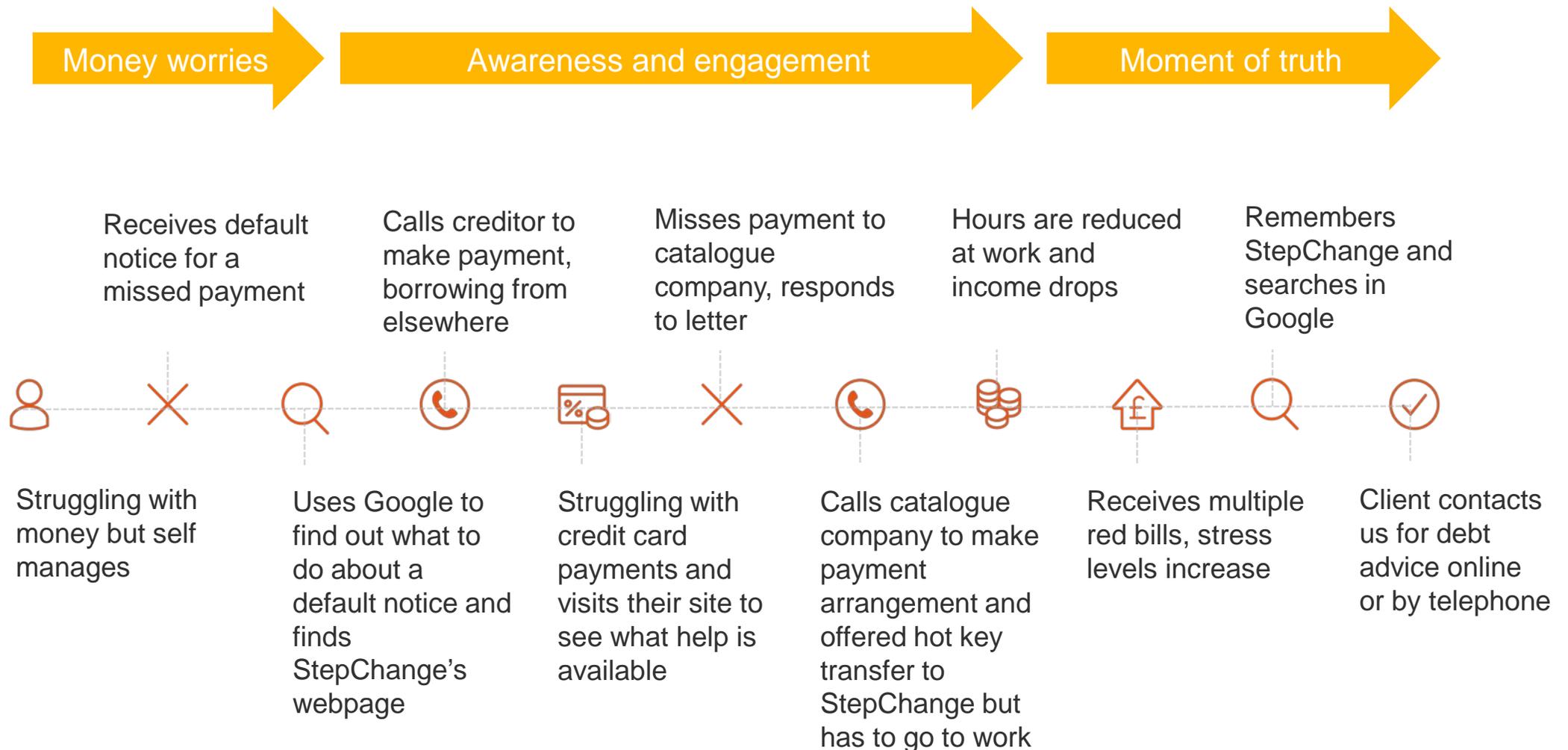
**Sharing** real stories can encourage customers to take the first step towards debt advice sooner



Highlighting the **real reasons** people fall into debt and what help is available can reduce feelings of shame and anxiety

# A typical client journey

Our research suggests a typical client may go through all of these stages, or loop back, before eventually coming to us for help:



## 2. Recent success stories



# Redundancy



**Age:** 35

**Reason for debt:**  
Redundancy

**Debt solution:**  
Debt management plan  
(DMP)

Dave's situation was out of hand, so he turned to us for help

**“I got into trouble when I lost my job.”**

Dave was made redundant and struggled to find a new construction job straight away. Even though he eventually found another job, he was still relying on credit cards to cover essentials.

“I turned to my credit cards to pay for essential things each month that I needed to live.”

His cards were soon maxed out, he couldn't get approved for new credit, and his minimum payments became unaffordable.

Although he was trying his best to keep up to date with his payments, he eventually went into arrears. After this happened, he was encouraged to take the first step towards debt advice...

# Redundancy



**Age:** 35

**Reason for debt:**  
Redundancy

**Debt solution:**  
Debt management plan  
(DMP)

“Things quickly got out of control, and debts began to stack up. A fee-charging company actually recommended I speak to StepChange. My DMP with them allowed me to take control and repay my debts.”

The person he was speaking with spotted that he was in financial difficulty and suggested he talk to us.

We tailor each debt advice session to the customer’s needs, so we listened and took a free and impartial look at Dave’s finances including his income, outgoings and debts to get a complete picture of his situation.

We recommended a debt management plan (DMP) from a broad range of debt solutions, giving Dave everything he needed to make an informed decision.

Dave felt a DMP was right for him, so we helped him set everything up. Six years on, and with our continued support, he’s back in control of his money and debt free.

# Terminal illness



**Ages:** 67 and 72

**Reason for debt:**  
Terminal illness

**Debt solution:**  
Token payment plan  
and write off

## Making money one less worry for Agnes and James

**‘We want to enjoy the time we have left, as best we can.’**

Agnes and James came to us after our partners Macmillan encouraged them to speak with us and take the first step towards debt advice.

We’re here for everyone including our most vulnerable clients. Our specialist advocacy team can help, however big or small their debt problem is, whether they’re dealing with mental health problems, long-term or terminal illness or they have difficulty communicating.

James was diagnosed with terminal cancer, and it quickly became apparent to our team that their primary concern was to ‘enjoy their remaining time as best they can’.

# Terminal illness



**Ages:** 67 and 72

**Reason for debt:**  
Terminal illness

**Debt solution:**  
Token payment plan  
and write off

We tailor each debt advice session to the customer's needs, so we listened and took a free and impartial look at James' and Agnes' finances including their income, outgoings and debts to get a complete picture of their situation.

We recommended a token payment plan (TPP) from a broad range of debt solutions, giving them all the information needed to make an informed decision.

We referred James and Agnes to our write off service due to the medical evidence disclosed by James. Our specialist team was able to apply directly to his creditors with the supporting information.

As James' diagnosis was terminal, his case was given a higher priority to make sure a response was received quickly.

James' creditors remained in contact with us and within three months of the initial request the debts had been written off. Sadly, James passed away two months later.

# Separation



**Age:** 39

**Reason for debt:**  
Separation

**Debt solution:**  
Debt management plan  
(DMP)

**Rob isn't constantly worried about money anymore**

**“I managed to keep things going for about two and a half years, but then I started using payday loans to make ends meet.”**

Robert's marriage broke down at the same time he had to change jobs, leaving him £800 a month worse off.

“I was paying the mortgage for my wife and kids, trying to find somewhere to live, and starting again on my own. I managed to keep things going for about two and a half years, but then I started using payday loans to make ends meet. It was a simple case of too much going out and not enough coming in. There was a little bit of stubborn pride as well, in not wanting to admit that I couldn't keep everything going.

“I was borrowing a bit extra each month, and a bit more and a bit more, and it got out of control....”

# Separation



**Age:** 39

**Reason for debt:**  
Separation

**Debt solution:**  
Debt management plan  
(DMP)

His situation reached crisis point when he couldn't secure a loan from his bank for a replacement vehicle. They said to me, 'I don't think you realise how bad things are. You need to seek help now.' They encouraged me to take the first step towards debt advice and contact StepChange."

We listened and took a free and impartial look at Rob's finances including his income, outgoings and debts to get a complete picture of his situation.

We recommended a debt management plan (DMP) from a broad range of debt solutions, giving Rob all the information needed to make an informed decision.

Rob went ahead with a DMP and we supported him all the way, from the initial set up to his last payment.

"I was really stressed out all the time, and it does make you a little bit short-tempered. Every little thing gets to you because you're always worrying about money."

# A lack of budgeting



**Age:** 25

**Reason for debt:**  
Lack of budgeting

**Debt solution:**  
Debt management plan  
(DMP)

**Caitlin's in control of her budget after switching to us**

**“I was at work in tears wondering how I was going to get through the month.”**

With a new job and a new flat, Caitlin turned to credit to pay for a few new household essentials. Not long after, she wrote her car off which meant it was a struggle to afford her everyday living expenses.

“I was at work in tears wondering how I was going to get through the month, and that's when I had a moment of madness and took out my first payday loan. Everything went downhill from there. The interest built up on that payday loan, and I had to take out another one to try and pay it off, but that was one that I was supposed to pay back in one go, and I just couldn't afford it.”

“I took out a debt management plan (DMP) with another company, but it wasn't until after my annual review with them that I realised what huge charges I had been paying...”

# A lack of budgeting



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Lack of budgeting

**Debt solution:**  
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A year in, I actually owed more to the creditors that when the plan had started.” Caitlin took the first step towards switching her DMP a year ago after finding us online.

“I found StepChange online last year and have now felt able to tell my mum about the situation as I feel I’m dealing with it and am on course to pay everything back.”

We tailor each debt advice session to the customer’s needs, so we listened and took a free and impartial look at Caitlin’s finances including her income, outgoings and debts to get a complete picture of her situation.

We recommended a debt management plan (DMP) from a broad range of debt solutions, giving Caitlin all the information needed to make an informed decision.

Caitlin decided DMP was still right for her, so we helped her switch over to us. We’re always on hand for as long as our customers need us and Caitlin’s nearly debt free.

### 3. Create your own success stories



# Step by step

## Your stories should:

1

Show the real reasons why people fall into debt. Use our statistics or ask your frontline advisors

2

Reassure your customers you'll listen to them, understand their feelings and want to help and support them

3

Explain how you helped, what the outcome was for the customer and how they felt during the process

4

Give a broader view of your process such as what happens after the first call or where they can find help on your website

5

Let your customers know they can get free and impartial debt help from StepChange



Remember, you're trying to help reduce feelings of shame or anxiety

# Tell your customers about us

Don't forget to mention us and link to us online:



- ✓ We're the UK's largest provider of genuinely free and impartial debt advice
- ✓ We offer the broadest range of debt solutions
- ✓ We can offer extra support to vulnerable clients
- ✓ Our extensive online services mean that clients can engage digitally



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