





The content

Debt Advice Handbook 15th edition

Description

With living costs and unemployment rising, budgets squeezed and problem debt on the increase, no adviser should be without this essential guide to the practice and process of giving money advice in England and Wales.

Who's this book for?

It is essential for debt advisers, welfare rights advisers, lawyers, local authority and housing association staff, social workers and union official.

What does it do?

The handbook provides the most comprehensive information needed by advisers on the key stages of money advice, including interviewing clients, establishing liability, prioritising debts, preparing a financial statement, negotiating with creditors and dealing with bailiffs. Fully indexed and cross-referenced to law, regulations and official guidance, and to court and tribunal decisions Includes tactical guidance and examples

What's new?

Fully updated to cover all recent changes to legislation, caselaw and court procedure and practice Emphasis is placed on taking due care of vulnerable clients and making sure that any payment arrangements agreed are appropriate. There is a focus on sustainable credit arrangements that do not affect a client's abilities to pay essential living expenses and priority debts.

Properties

Author(s):
CPAG

This content was last updated:
2025-06-26

Print publication date
Feb, 2024

Print ISBN
978 1 915324 11 5

7. Dealing with priority debts

The next stage of the debt advice process is to deal with priority debts. See Chapter 8 for more on this. This tries to ensure that the threat of homelessness, the loss of essential goods or services or the threat of imprisonment is removed. It is essential that arrangements for priority debts are agreed at this stage. This allows payments towards priority debts to be included in the expenditure, rather than showing in the financial statement as income available for non-priority creditors (see here).

Priority creditors might demand to see a financial statement when negotiating priority debts, and so this stage of the process can overlap with Stage six.

Explain each available strategy, with its advantages or disadvantages, to the client. They may need to consult with a partner or other family member, so provide the information in writing if possible. Once agreed, you can then implement the strategy by negotiation or a court application. The client must carry out their own agreed course of action – eg, start paying rent or set up direct debits. You must always confirm with the creditor, in writing, a strategy agreed verbally, and request a written acknowledgement. Advise the client to start making any agreed payments immediately and not wait for confirmation from the creditor.

Printed from CPAG (<https://askcpag.org.uk>). (c) Copyright CPAG 2025. All Rights Reserved.

Please be aware that welfare rights law and guidance change frequently. This page was printed on Friday, October 17, 2025 and may go out of date.