

Handy tips for using the 'How to deal with debt' guide

Who is the guide for?

The guide is for people who live in England and Wales. It is designed for those who want to take action to deal with their debt, and are capable of doing this on their own or with some support.

What the guide contains

The guide is made up of three steps:

- Step 1: Know what you've really got. This step takes users through completing an accurate and sustainable budget that is compliant with the Standard Financial Statement (SFS).
- Step 2: Maximise your money. This step looks at how users can increase income and reduce expenditure.
- Step 3: Choose your debt solution. This step looks at the different solutions for dealing with debts and how to engage with creditors.

In the inside back cover pocket are additional support materials including:

1. 'Your full budget' – for users to work out all their income, outgoings and debts. 'Summary budget for creditors' – to use when negotiating with creditors.
2. Three sample letters; 'Hold action on your account', 'Pro-rata offers' and 'Token payment or no offer of payment'.

Top tips for using the guide with your clients

- ✓ The guide contains information to help people in lots of different debt situations. Your clients may be put off initially by the size, but they won't usually need to read all of it.
- ✓ Don't skip the introduction as it includes **Three things to do first** and information about asking creditors to hold action, which can get your clients some breathing space.
- ✓ The guide sometimes recommends contacting National Debtline for advice. This isn't anything to be worried about. It just means that your client may need extra advice.
- ✓ The guide makes references to National Debtline fact sheets and sample letters and explains how to get copies.
- ✓ Use the 'Check your progress' checklists at the end of each step to make sure everything in the step is completed.
- ✓ Each step starts with a handy 'What you need to start...' and 'Why is this step important?'
- ✓ Before completing Step 3, make sure Step 1 and Step 2 have been completed – we know from experience clients can want to go straight to the solution.
- ✓ There is a useful overview of Step 3 at the beginning of the step. This explains how to go through the step – only sections that apply will need to be read.

