

# Money, Debt and Mental Health - Resources

## Money and Mental Health Policy Institute

- Recently published a new paper – [Mind the Mental Health Income Gap](#).
- The report highlighted people with common mental disorders such as anxiety or depression receive annual average incomes of £8,400 less than people without mental health problems.
- Report also finds that the mental health income gap is driven by three systemic factors: low employment prospects, low wages and long-term benefits cuts. These changes in the labour market and social security system mean people with mental health problems have less money in their pockets, which, for many has led to lower standards of living.
- More briefings, tools and guidance can be found on their website [here](#)

## Money Advice and Pensions Service (MAPS)

- Launched an [online self-diagnosis money tool](#) to link those with multiple financial issues with services / providers in a quick way.
- Also developing a self-referral web form which OGDs can put a link to on their websites.
- Further information on their support and resources via the attached presentation delivered by MAPS. You can also find public information on their work on mental health via their website [here](#) including details of the long term financial wellbeing strategy and their response to Covid19.

## Money and Mental Health UK

- Mental Health & Money Advice is a UK-wide service that combines support for both mental health and financial problems.
- Where they spot a problem they also engage directly with employers.  
<https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en/hub/coronavirus-money-guidance>

## Citizens Advice Bureau

- Developed the [Council Tax protocol](#) in partnership with Local Government Association (LGA), which aims to offer practical steps to prevent people from getting into debt and outlines how to ensure enforcement agents action within the law
- Infographic below with further explanation below:

### Citizens Advice Council Tax Protocol

Developed in partnership with the Local Government Association, the Council Tax Protocol offers practical steps aimed at preventing people from getting into debt and outlines how to ensure enforcement agents act within the law.

The protocol asks that councils:

- work with enforcement and advice agencies to help people pay their council tax bills while accessing debt advice;
- ensure all communication with residents about Council Tax is clear;
- use the Standard Financial Statement when calculating repayment plans;
- offer flexible payment arrangements to residents;
- do not use enforcement agents where a resident receives Council Tax Support;
- publish their policy on residents in vulnerable circumstances.

The full protocol is available on our website.



### Citizens Advice is calling on councils to commit to fair and effective debt collection



Council tax debt is the **most common** debt issue we see



Council tax debt has risen **by a third** in the last 3 years



**61 councils** have signed up to our council tax protocol

### Why should your council sign?

1. Budget constraints mean councils face significant pressure to collect all the tax they're owed.
2. Where local authorities and debt advice agencies work closely together, collection processes can be improved.
3. This leads to more early interventions to support people struggling with payments, helps prevent further charges and reduces both collection costs and demand on local public services.

### Contact your local Citizens Advice to discuss the protocol

### Councils who have signed the protocol:

*'We recently signed the Council Tax Protocol as our public commitment to its principles of fairness, partnership working and transparency in local authority debt collection'*

**- Paul Carver, Exchequer Services Manager, Basingstoke and Deane Council**

*'We have a duty to collect the money owed, but we want to do so in a fair way and only go down the enforcement route when other avenues are exhausted.'*

**- Councillor Roger Lawrence, Leader, Wolverhampton City Council**



- The website also includes a map of which local authorities have signed up to the protocol.

## Mental Health and Work

- Resources to support [mental health for small workplaces](#)
- [Wellness Action Plans](#) (separate guides for employees, line managers and people working from home)
- Business in the Community (BITC) [Suicide Prevention Toolkit for Employers](#)
- Business in the Community (BITC) [Postvention Toolkit for Employers](#)
- Initiative from Microsoft on [reskilling for in demand jobs](#)

## Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT)

- Introducing the 'Breathing Scheme' scheme (May 2021) to implement a period of enforcement suspension to support debt management and those with mental ill health.
- It also looks to extend timescales for debt repayment (legislation laid out in September and guidelines are being produced to identify and signpost people to the scheme).

## Other Resources

- **Return on Investment**

Public Health England produced a report on [effective mental health preventions](#) which included providing debt advice to protect people's mental health. Over five years from a societal perspective there is a ROI of at least £2.60 from every £1 invested investing in face-to-face debt advice services. This is a highly conservative estimate as it does not take account of additional health benefits, including benefits to families.

- **Good collections practices in the private sector.**

- [Ofcom guidance on treating vulnerable customers fairly](#)
- [Guidance on supporting customers in financial difficulty from the Lending Standards Board](#)
- [Draft FCA guidance on the treatment of vulnerable customers](#) which build on the [Financial Conduct Authority \(FCA\) Fairness Principles](#). Steve Coppard from the Cabinet Office is looking into these when considering how to improve government collection practises.

## Infographic – The Case for Fairness in UK Debt Collection

