

Charity Sees Demand for Debt Help Double as UK Economy Hits Buffers

Calls to freephone number up 130% since Christmas as Christians Against Poverty opens 100th Centre

National debt-counselling charity Christians Against Poverty (CAP) today warned how more and more Britons are falling into uncontrollable debt as it revealed figures showing a 130% rise in calls for help to its freephone number since Christmas.

Calls rose from 65 per week in December to 150 per week in March, but the charity has responded to increased need and today celebrated the opening of its 100th debt counselling centre, which will operate in Leicester.

The charity has witnessed a rapid increase in demand for help, as those who were previously financially secure are being pushed to the limit with the collapse in house prices, the steep rise in unemployment and the looming spectre of deflation.

The charity, which recently celebrated winning the Sunday Times 'Best Small Company to Work For' for the second year running, operates through a growing network of debt counselling centres, spread across all four countries of the UK.

The 100th centre, which will be run in partnership with Leicester Christian Fellowship, will follow the charity's free and award-winning approach to debt management and is one of thirteen opening during April as part of CAP's drive to have 1000 centres across the UK by 2021.

The charity has also trained 6 new debt coaches to join existing centres as they increase personnel to meet demand.

CAP offers a free, one-to-one debt counselling service which is available to all members of the local community, regardless of religious belief. Having been founded in 1996, the charity has grown rapidly over the past two years, with an additional 24 centres opened in 2008 alone.

CAP's Chief Executive, Matt Barlow, said, "Whilst we don't want to focus on the increase of people being pushed to the financial edge, we do need to recognise that many more people across the UK are struggling financially.

"The good news is, though, we're here to help, and in opening our 100th centre today we are sending a clear message out to those in difficulty; we won't stop until we've achieved our aim of having a CAP centre in every town and city across the UK by 2021.

"Many of our clients are now enjoying a life free from debt thanks to CAP, and we are keen to help many more as the recession continues to bite. This is a significant milestone for us and a very exciting day indeed. If anyone is in financial difficulty, I would urge them to call our freephone number or visit our website to get more help."

For more information visit www.capuk.org or call 0800 328 0006.

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Notes to editors:

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Further information
[About Christians Against Poverty](#)

CAP aims to show God's love in action by providing sustainable poverty relief through debt counselling, advice and practical help. CAP's unique 'hands on' approach empowers people to help themselves out of poverty and be released from the fear, oppression and worry generated by overwhelming debts. Vital financial and budgeting life skills are developed through our services, thus ensuring poverty relief is sustainable.

The charity operates through a growing network of centres based around the UK, all opened in partnership with a local church. Over the last thirteen years, the charity has grown from one man working from his home with a donation of £10, to a national charity with 102 centres across the country and an annual turnover of £5 million.

CAP's vision is to answer the national problem of debt in the UK by having at least one CAP centre operating in every major town and city by the year 2021.