

Here to help local authorities and advice agencies on 0300 330 0517



[Consultancy Line](#)



[Housing Debt Casework](#)



[Training](#)

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In the lead up to Christmas there were a number of **Government department announcements** with a focus on tackling various aspects of homelessness:

- [Summary of measures to tackle homelessness](#) across the parliament announced by the Communities' minister
- [Settlement funding assessment calculation model local government finance settlement 2016/2017](#) – this includes a sum for Homelessness prevention funding
- [Homelessness Change/Platform for Life 2015-17 funding](#) - 60 national projects approved to provide hostel bed spaces and facilities for the provision of healthcare, training or education to improve physical and mental health outcomes for rough sleepers
- [3.5 million awarded to support domestic abuse victims](#) - 46 LAs were successful in securing funding.
- [Homelessness inquiry](#) - The Communities and Local Government (CLG) Committee has announced an inquiry into the causes of homelessness, including the approaches taken by national and local government to prevent and tackle homelessness. Written submissions must be made by **8 February 2016**

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**Parliamentary briefings:**

- [Council Tax Reduction scheme](#) - The briefing paper provides information on the implementation of local tax reduction scheme from 1 April 2013. A review of the scheme commenced on 2 Dec 2015. The review will also consider whether it should form part of UC payments in the future
- [Universal Credit changes from April 2016](#) - The briefing paper provides details about the Universal Credit and changes coming into effect post April 2016.

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**Free resources to help you engage with people who are struggling financially**



StepChange Debt Charity is the UK's largest provider of free independent debt advice, helping thousands of people every week overcome debt problems.

Where NHAS members are aware of a lack of provision for debt advice in their area or they know some clients who may prefer Telephone and Online advice then the [StepChange](#) service may be beneficial. The charity provides a range of managed debt solutions and, where appropriate, supports people through an insolvency process.

Expert tailored advice is given via a free-phone helpline Monday to Friday 8am-8pm and Saturday 8am-4pm, or online at any time via their Debt Remedy tool at [www.stepchange.org/](http://www.stepchange.org/)

[StepChange](#) have a number of free resources available that you can use to engage with people who are struggling financially. [Order your free materials here.](#)

Increases in personal debt that can occur at this time of year, can sometimes result in difficulties maintaining rent or mortgage payments. The NHAS Housing Debt Casework service can provide you with telephone support for your clients' with rent or mortgage arrears or take referrals and work directly with the household (with their agreement). See the following [HDC case study](#) which details the NHAS [Housing Debt Casework service arrears and negotiation work](#).

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### [The Government has produced a response to consultation on further Court & Tribunal fees proposals](#)

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#### Family mediation leaflet

Over the last 12 months the NHAS has seen a noticeable increase in the number of relationship breakdown queries from all members.

[Click here for the Family Mediation Council public leaflet](#), detailing what support is available.

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In December, it was announced that Homeless Link & Sitra would establish a new [structure](#) in 2016

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#### Homelessness Symposiums



The NHAS will run 3 events in March:

9<sup>th</sup> March – Norwich

15<sup>th</sup> March – London

17<sup>th</sup> March – Birmingham

The events will include case law updates and workshops on homelessness prevention and domestic abuse. **Look out for the event flyers coming soon.**

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#### Recently published

- The DWP [removal of the spare room subsidy evaluation report](#) was issued in December 2015
  - The DWP has produced a report analysing the [Use of discretionary housing payments April - September 2015](#)
  - The Work & Pension's Committee has produced the following [report](#) regarding the local welfare safety net
  - The Ministry of Justice report entitled [Survey of Not for Profit legal advice providers legal advice providers](#) provides a profile of Not for Profit Advice providers in England & Wales, the clients they work with and how the changes to legal aid have affected the current delivery of services along with perceptions about the future.
  - Aviva publish a report on [the level of family debt](#)
  - Citizens Advice has produced ["The state of debt collection"](#) report
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#### Case Law

- [Southern Pacific Mortgage Ltd v V \[2015\] EW Misc B42 \(CC\) \(19 November 2015\)](#) – County court case re mortgage discrimination and disability
  - [Birmingham City Council v Mondhlani \[2015\] EW Misc B41 \(CC\) \(06 November 2015\)](#) - High Court Enforcement & eviction. Look out for the next edition of Housing Matters which will include a feature on High Court Evictions
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#### Annual survey 2015



Thanks to all the members that took part in completing the NHAS Annual survey before Christmas.

314 responses were received from local authorities and voluntary agencies.

- Members identified key issues affecting their service and
- highlighted how the NHAS can support them in the future

[For a summary of the survey's key points log in to nhas.org.uk.](#)

