

70 Years since the Birth of Advice

70 years ago on 3rd September war was declared

70 years ago on 4th September the first CABs opened

The IMA News is now available to download from our website



The first advice centres were established based on the theory that, in times of conflict, people would need clear, calm advice about all sorts of practical problems. The reality was that when the war ended the advice was still very much needed. **Demand has increased and changed over the years**

- 1939 to 45, during the war years enquiries focussed on rationing, tracing lost contacts and war damage relief
- The 40s and 50s: The NHS was set up generating queries about health and dental treatment. The Rent Act (lifting rent restrictions) lead to a rise in Housing queries
- The 60s: Homelessness grew as rents rocketed and the Leasehold Reform Act generated enquiries. The Divorce Reform Act produced a large number of queries about divorce, maintenance and access
- The 70s: OFT formed and Consumer issues rose, redundancy introduced followed by employment related enquiries
- The 80s: Two recessions creating huge unemployment lead to a surge of employment, benefit and debt enquiries
- The 90s: DDA prompted disability related enquiries and following conflict abroad Immigration and Asylum queries began to rise
- 2000s: Introduction of Tax Credits created queries about overpayments. Credit boom leads to record debt and insolvency figures and soaring repossessions. More recently the recession exaggerated and intensified all current advice needs.

.....and the services have developed to meet the demand. A range of free advice agencies and services providing specialist Money Advice have developed over the years in order to meet this growing demand. Today the IMA have members from over 1000 agencies around the UK who all provide free specialist Money Advice.

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IMA Information

Environmentally Friendly

In order to avoid unnecessary costs and to reduce our carbon footprint, the IMA uses electronic correspondence wherever possible. As such it is vital that you ensure we have your correct email address. If you are not sure please get in touch:

Contacting the IMA

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Website: www.i-m-a.org.uk

Telephone: 0113 270 8444, 0845 094 2384

Fax: 0113 270 2111, 0845 094 2175

IMA Conference

The IMA will be holding the **2010 Conference** on 10th and 11th May in Harrogate, North Yorkshire. We will be updating our website with full information in due course. Bookings made before December 31st 2009 will benefit from delegate fees held at the same rate as last year after which time new rates will apply. For booking information please email Jane Guy on jane.guy1@btinternet.com There will also be a new **AGM Special first day rate** of £65, allowing you to attend the AGM in the morning on 10th May and stay to enjoy the rest of the first day of conference.

Our **2009 Conference** took place at The Ibis Hotel, Earls Court on 9th and 10th July 2009. The Conference was a huge success all round. Feedback from delegates has been very complimentary with some suggestions for improvement which we will be working on for next year.

IMA Membership

The IMA membership has been rising steadily over the year and has now reached all time high of **1437**. We feel that this is due to the enhanced and increased membership benefits including access to apply to be an Approved DRO Intermediary. We hope that this trend will continue especially as we aim to have our IMA Accreditation Qualification in place by Spring / Summer 2010.

Subscription rates for 2010: It has been agreed that there will not be an increase in subscription rates for this year so membership costs will remain the same yet again.

IMA Accreditation Update

Thanks to funding from Severn Trent Trust Fund we have been able to embark on a joint venture with Staffordshire University to develop a system for the Accreditation of Money Advisers. This qualification of 'professional recognition' will be linked to IMA membership levels but will not be compulsory.

The objective is to establish a 'robust', but flexible mechanism for the accreditation of Money Advisers. In order to obtain such accreditation Money Advisers will be required to successfully complete an online Accreditation Module, which will both provide knowledge specific teaching and will be assessed by the University. The module will be clearly structured and linked to agreed competencies for Money Advice. Money Advisers will be able to complete their accreditation in a flexible manner which is suitable to their employment pattern.

We will be aiming our accreditation system and qualification at 'Caseworker' skills level. The Accreditation process and qualification will be built on the National Occupational Standards for Legal Advice which have recently been reviewed by the Skills for Justice, sector skills council. We will firstly develop a Role Profile for Money Advice Caseworker and then decide which competences we feel belong to this profile. Because this Accreditation and qualification will be based on NOS it will therefore be capable of working with other qualifications and the QCF (Qualifications Credit Framework).

We are not yet sure what the cost of the qualification will be but we will also be researching costs and bursary options.

The IMA Training Programme

Courses September 09 to March 2010

Please go to the IMA Website to see course aims and objectives, pre-course entry requirements, check prices and download a booking form www.i-m-a.org.uk/

Course	Venues	Dates
Avoiding Mortgage Possession <i>All of the options</i> See page 4 of the training brochure	To be arranged	To be arranged
Bailiffs' Law - Advanced <i>A legal update</i> See page 4 of the training brochure	Cambridge Chester Sheffield	6 th November 09 3 rd December 09 5 th February 10
Bankruptcy in Practice - Half day (New in 2009) <i>An explanation of the legislation and what happens in practice</i> See page 5 of the training brochure	London Birmingham Cardiff Sheffield	23 rd November 09 27 th November 09 7 th December 09 16 th December 09
Benefits and Tax Credits in Money Advice <i>Understanding benefits entitlement and maximising income</i> See page 5 of the training brochure	Sheffield Bristol	10 th December 09 20 th November 09
Charging Orders – A Practical Application <i>Getting the best for your client</i> See page 6 of the training brochure	Manchester Nottingham London	21 st October 09 6 th October 09 23 rd September 09
Finding and Using County Court Rules in Money Advice (See requirements on page 6) <i>Don't forget to bring your Civil Court Users Book</i> See page 6 of the training brochure	Sheffield Bristol	8 th February 10 15 th February 10
Local Authority Debt Recovery <i>Procedures, duties and responsibilities</i> See page 7 of the training brochure	Birmingham Manchester	29 th January 10 11 th February 10
Orders for Sale (New in 2009) Understanding and opposing them, including relevant statutes and caselaw See page 7 of the training brochure	Birmingham Manchester London Cardiff	13 th January 10 16 th February 10 17 th December 09 7 th January 10
Parking Penalties – Liability and Enforcement <i>Understanding the legislation, liabilities and enforcement</i> See page 8 of the training brochure	Newcastle Bristol Leeds	21 st January 10 15 th January 10 27 th November 09
Supervising Money Advice (New in 2009) <i>Tools for effective supervision and management of Money Advice</i> See page 8 of the training brochure	Sheffield Birmingham Cambridge Brighton	18 th January 10 26 th October 09 11 th January 10 14 th December 09
Time Orders – Practical Application (See requirements on page 9) <i>Identifying the opportunity, drafting and arguing</i> See page 9 of the training brochure	Manchester Birmingham London Leeds	4 th November 09 2 nd December 09 19 th January 10 3 rd February 10
Understanding the Creditor Sector of the Industry <i>A glimpse of the other side!</i> See page 9 of the training brochure	Manchester Birmingham	19 th January 10 10 th February 10
Unenforceable Regulated Consumer Credit Act Agreements <i>Possible pitfalls and points to watch</i> See page 10 of the training brochure	Sheffield Liverpool Bristol Cambridge	27 th October 09 20 th November 09 11 th November 09 19 th October 09

Visit our website to download an application for and the full brochure

Training Continued.....

IMA Wiseradviser Seminars

All of the free 2009 seminars run by IMA in partnership with Wiseradviser are now fully booked. Courses for next year will be announced by IMA in the New Year.

New IMA Courses in 2009 *(see the brochure on our website for more information)*

New Free Training from the IMA - Avoiding Mortgage Possession

We are currently working on providing a suite of new **free** courses around the country in partnership with Department for Communities and Local Government. We will be announcing the dates shortly on our website. The training will give money advisers the knowledge and skills they need to fully understand and advise on avoiding Mortgage repossession including Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI), the Mortgage Pre Action Protocol (PAP), the Mortgage Rescue Scheme (MRS) and the Homeowner Mortgage Support Scheme (HMS).

Bankruptcy in Practice

Delivered in partnership with Payplan, this half day course is aimed at caseworker and specialist level advisers. This course aims to explain Insolvency legislation giving examples of what happens in practice. This course will help the adviser to make sure they have a fuller understanding of bankruptcy and help the client to make a more informed choice. The price for this course is only £25 per delegate (to cover the venue and refreshments costs).

Orders for Sale

This course aims to give participants a good understanding of Orders for Sale and relevant statutes and Caselaw. They will have explored situations where an Order for Sale may be applied for by a debtor or a creditor and how to oppose an application by a creditor. The course is suitable for experienced advisers acting as lay advocates and \ or advisers wanting to increase their knowledge of the legal processes that lead to Orders for Sale being granted by the courts.

Supervising Money Advice

This course is suitable for Caseworkers, Supervisors or Managers who are responsible for casework quality systems - or those aspiring to this role. The course aims to provide best practice guides and tools for effective supervision and management of Money Advisers. Objectives include understanding the purpose and functions of effective supervision and management of money advisers including identifying and using differing leadership and management styles and interpersonal communication. The course also focuses on best practice processes, procedures and methods of achieving effective supervision and understanding technical factors to be assessed when conducting file reviews specifically for Money Advisers.

Money Advice Trust - Wiseradviser

New dates for free Wiseradviser training courses are now available. A copy of the September – December Wiseradviser training brochure has been distributed by post to all IMA members.

Please visit www.wiseradviser.org to book a place on the training and to view further information about course requirements and pre-course reading. If you would like to take advantage of this free training **please book as soon as possible** as places fill up quickly.

New Wiseradviser Website

A new version of the Wiseradviser website was launched on 24th August.

The website has been redesigned so it is easier to search for resources, manage face-to-face training, track distance and e-learning and join discussions on money advice related topics.

Please note: All advisers are asked to register on the new site if they haven't done so since 24th August as the login and password you used for the previous site will no longer work. Please contact the Wiseradviser Training Team on 020 7489 7790 if you need any assistance.

Performance Awards 2010

The IMA is pleased to announce the Performance Awards scheme for Money Advice in 2010 is now open for submissions. The scheme is open to everyone working in the **free to client sector** and covers both individuals and organisations who deliver money advice. The application process is straightforward and an application form has been designed to make applying as easy as possible. A panel of judges made up from leading experts in the money advice field will consider applications submitted by the closing date of 28th February 2010.

All finalists will be notified by the 31st March 2010 and invited to a reception at the IMA Annual Conference on Thursday 10th May where they will be awarded certificates. The winners will be announced later in the evening at the Gala Dinner at the Majestic hotel in Harrogate during the IMA Annual Conference. Entry will be by application form and you can get further details and an application form from Caroline Siarkiewicz by emailing her at execdirector@i-m-a.org.uk

There will be 5 categories for award as follows:

MONEY ADVISER OF THE YEAR

DEBT TEAM OF THE YEAR

BEST PARTNERSHIP AWARD

BEST NEW INITIATIVE AWARD

BEST SOCIAL POLICY INITIATIVE AWARD

IMA Performance Awards 2009

The first ever IMA Performance Awards were a great success. The awards ceremony was held during Annual Conference on 10th July. A full account of the evening will be in the next issue of Quarterly Account (Autumn 09). The evening was enjoyed by everyone not only the winners in each of the 4 categories but also each of the 20 finalists whose money advice work was rewarded and recognised. The hard work and tremendous efforts that money advisers put into helping clients is rarely celebrated, sometimes it even goes unnoticed and the IMA's Performance Awards scheme was designed specifically to highlight everything that is good in money advice.

The IMA is grateful to the sponsors of the scheme, Allied International Credit, Auriga, Experian, the Money Advice Trust and of course BT who saw the value in the scheme and helped its launch.

The 2009 Award Winners

MONEY ADVISER OF THE YEAR

- From six finalists the winner was
- Janet Noble from Hartlepool CAB

DEBT TEAM OF THE YEAR

- From the six finalists the winning team was
- Derby Money Advice
- Award accepted by Carol Clarke and Celia Grantham on behalf of the team

BEST PARTNERSHIP AWARD

- From the four finalists the winning partnership was
- Advice Link Money Advice Team Blackpool.
- Award accepted by Dean Stockwell on behalf of the partnership

BEST NEW INITIATIVE AWARD

- From the four finalists the winner was
- Community Law Service Leicester and County & BBC Radio Leicester
- Award accepted on behalf of the initiative by Adam Markillie-Mallinson (the Debt Doctor)

You can have a look at the event by viewing the photographs of the evening on the IMA website <http://www.i-m-a.me.uk/awards/home.html>

DRO Update

The IMA as a Competent Authority

The IMA now has 165 Approved Intermediaries working around England and Wales. Intermediaries approved by the IMA have submitted a total of 487 DRO and have had 422 approved so far up to the end of August 09.

Problems with Missing Debts

We have come across some instances where debts appear to have disappeared from the submitted DRO application form - the following instruction should help.

When using the 'Other creditor' facility for listing debts, some intermediaries have been selecting 'Add creditor' and then after completion, incorrectly selected 'Other creditor' again instead of 'Yes or No to any more creditors?'. The DRO unit have identified that this is why creditors are disappearing in a few cases. Intermediaries must instead follow this sequence: 'Other creditor > Add creditor > Yes or No to Any more creditors?' and then continue as required.

You should always print and check the hardcopy before final submission - See page 42 of the Guidance Document; Pre-Submission Check.

DROs and Walking Possession Orders

Page 6 of the same Guidance states: '..... it should be noted that where a creditor has the benefit of a "walking possession agreement" that creditor would be deemed to be secured creditor and the rights of secured creditors are unaffected by the making of a DRO.'

Bristol City Council's new policy regarding DROs:

"In order to maximise the effectiveness of Debt Relief Orders for customers who are experiencing severe financial hardship, Bristol City Council will adopt a policy of recalling cases from external bailiffs on the grounds of hardship (thus effectively releasing the customer from a walking possession agreement) in order that the current debts can be included in the Order." However intermediaries should give regard to the value of assets listed and if greater than £300 should consider whether the debtor meets the asset parameter for the purpose of the DRO.

This change in policy was directly as a result of dialogue initiated by Mandy Williams, from North Bristol Advice Centre, who has now also successfully negotiated with Bath and North East Somerset Council and is about to negotiate with South Gloucestershire Council. There is actually no need for the council to withdraw the bailiffs for the debt to be 'included' in the DRO but obviously this approach means that there is then no on-going need for the client to make payments towards the debt. We hope that this result will encourage you to do the same in your area.

New Competent Authorities

Three more Competent Authorities have been recently approved by the Insolvency Service: Advice UK, Insolvency Practitioners Association and Shelter.

Resources for Intermediaries

The IMA is in the process of updating it's website to include a 'Resources for Intermediaries' page <http://www.i-m-a.org.uk/debt-relief-orders.html>. There will be some new resources on this page including:

- Comments on the DRO Guidance
- Downloadable IS Leaflet 'Guide to DROs'
- Downloadable DRO Flyer
- DRO Checklist
- links to the Specialist Support Consultancy Online

Feedback

We are always happy to receive feedback and suggestions from our members about their experiences with DROs which we can feed back to the Insolvency Service during our Competent Authority meetings.

News from around the Money Advice sector

Mental Health Evidence Form

A new design of the Debt and Mental Health Evidence Form is available on the Money Advice Trust website - see Debt and Mental Health Resources www.moneyadvicetrust.org/section.asp?sid=12 The purpose of the DMHEF is to minimise the time and resources involved in collecting relevant information from a health or social care professional, whilst improving the quality of information provided for adviser or creditor decision-making about the most suitable action to take. The first edition of the DMHEF was launched in August 2008, however, in an effort to encourage greater use of this valuable resource during a period when increasing numbers of people are likely to be experiencing the twin impacts of debt and mental ill-health, MALG has redesigned the form to make it easier to use and understand. We attach their full Briefing Note. The Royal College of Psychiatrists completed the work with grant funding, and the form is also available on their website www.rcpsych.ac.uk/debt

The Common Financial Statement

New CFS trigger figures were published on Aug 1st 2009 are now available from the MAT Website

Declining offers of repayment

Many advisers who use the Common Financial Statement (CFS) expect that when they submit an offer and the clients' expenditure falls within the set "trigger figures" creditors will accept it. Unfortunately this does not always happen and a number of firms routinely decline CFS offers if they fall below a certain level or if the account has only just fallen into arrears.

When this happens our clients are often distressed and some advisers feel obliged to challenge the creditor's decision – which diverts them from seeing new clients. There are two options to overcome this problem: change the way the entire banking system account for bad debt; or work with creditors to change the way they word their decline letters. The latter was obviously seen as the more realistic goal and we are now working with the Common Financial Statement steering group – the body that oversees the development and updating of the CFS – and the British Bankers' Association to establish some guidance for creditors as to how they can word these letters in a more positive and encouraging way. In the meantime advisers should encourage their client to pay in-line with their offer from the moment it has been finalised and wait for the account to be passed onto a department or agency that can accept their offer. They could also consider complaining to FOS if the firm takes a long time to deal with someone who is clearly in long time financial difficulties.

CASHflow

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has recently awarded £500,000 to the Money Advice Trust (MAT) to facilitate the development of an assisted self-help debt advice project, CASHflow.

CASHflow will enable money advice clients to prepare financial statements with the assistance of advisers, as part of a structured process that will enable badged statements to be submitted to creditors by clients in support of direct negotiations. Please refer to the news section of the forthcoming edition of Quarterly Account for more information. Alternatively, you can contact Jim Fearnley, MAT's Head of research and Policy on 020 7653 9733 or at jim@moneyadvicetrust.org.

Rent and mortgage arrears information goes online

People behind with payments on their homes can now find all the information they need online at Directgov. Using animated videos, interview clips and articles, find everything you need, from communicating with landlords or mortgage lenders, to preparing for court and what happens during and after a court hearing. http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/NI1/Newsroom/DG_180275

National Homelessness Advice Service (NHAS) database

For those of you involved in running a county court duty advice desk (any agency), NHAS is building a database of duty desks, so if you haven't already provided the details of your desk, you can do so as follows: [Duty Possession Court Desks](#). The aim is to enable advisers and clients to find out whether the county court handling their case has a duty desk, and if so, its hours of operation and details of the service provider. Please continue to let us know about any county court issues affecting your clients that you think we should know about. E-mail jane.phipps@citizensadvice.org.uk

Sending unencrypted emails to creditors

In July HBOS pointed out that sending a clients name, address and account number in one unencrypted email constitutes a breach of data protection law.

We have discussed this matter with the Information Commissioner's Office. They inform us that sending this amount of personal information in a single unencrypted email does represent a risk to the individuals' personal data and it should not be done. We would therefore urge all advisers to ensure that any unencrypted emails **ONLY** contain either the clients name **OR** their account/reference number.

New Payment Methods to avoid Fuel Poverty

A new way of paying for fuel could help thousands of people avoid falling into the fuel poverty trap, according to charity National Energy Action (NEA). A recently published NEA report, funded by the Money Advice Trust, gives details of a new payment model that NEA says would help vulnerable households better manage their fuel bills, greatly reducing the risk of fuel poverty and fuel debt. NEA believes that by combining schemes that are already in use such as Fuel Direct, simple accessible cash accounts and direct debit payments opening up preferential tariffs, the numbers of people experiencing difficulty in paying their fuel bills could be significantly reduced. See report <http://www.nea.org.uk/assets/Publications/NEA-MAT-Payment-Method-Full-Report-FINAL-for-publication.pdf>

OFT Scrutiny

The OFT has recently refused to extend a credit broker's license to allow him to collect debts. The OFT felt that the applicant failed to demonstrate the expertise needed and so the application was refused. The OFT stated that debt collection is an area where there is a potentially high risk of harm to consumers. Anyone who wants to collect debts legally is subject to a high level of scrutiny by the OFT and those that do not meet our minimum standards of competence are not allowed to engage in this practice.

Social Policy

The IMAs Social Policy contact is branch rep Michael Clarke. The IMA also now has a Social Policy page on the website <http://www.i-m-a.org.uk/social-policy.html> where you can **follow a link to submit social policy evidence: [Social Policy Evidence Form](#)**

Advisers are encouraged to complete the survey whenever they find a financial services institution which has caused an issue for a client, or has demonstrated 'good practice'. The survey is quick and easy to use and advisers can save it in their internet browsers favourites for future use.

The evidence submitted will be used in two evidence reports into best practice in the financial service industry as well as being used to support the influencing work carried out with firms on behalf of the free money advice sector. Therefore advisers should submit examples of both good and bad practice which may affect more people than just their client.

There will be feed back from time to time on how this evidence has been used in: Arian, CAB Money, IMA news, and the regular email to advice UK members. If anyone would like to discuss the creditor liaison role or how this survey works in more detail contact: alex.macdermott@citizensadvice.org.uk or 020 7833 7191.

Creditor News

Allied International Credit (AIC) launch specialist mental health team!

AIC recently set up a specific team to deal with people who have mental health problems. The teams contact details are:

Specialist Team

The Clock Tower, Office No. 5

Chineham, Basingstoke

Hampshire

RG24 8BQ

Tel: 0141 228 3137

Fax: 01256 355155

Email: specialistteam@aiccorp.com

We have already heard some really good things about this team and we hope other advisers find them helpful as well.

GE Money & Santander Cards

GE Money is now part of the Santander group and it has been re-branded as Santander Cards. As a result there are now two organisations called Santander Cards – the one that deals with former GE Money accounts and the one that deals with Santander/Abbey credit cards. Unfortunately, neither organisation can deal with the other's incoming post. So if advisers write to Santander Cards in Milton Keynes about a store card debt – which is most likely to be a GE Money debt - the letter will have to be re-directed and there will be a delay in getting a response. Similarly if an adviser writes to the Santander Cards Financial Solutions Unit in Leeds about a Santander/Abbey credit card debt, the same will be true. The contacting creditor's pages that came with this edition of IMA News contain all relevant addresses.

HBOS suspend use of DMX

In May DMX started managing debt repayment plans on behalf of Halifax Bank of Scotland (HBOS). As a result advisers were asked to send all correspondence regarding HBOS accounts – including balance requests and offers of payment - to DMX. This arrangement was supposed to provide advisers and their client with quicker responses. However this did not happen and in a number of cases error were made that had a negative impact on clients. HBOS have apologised for these errors and they assure us that they are doing everything they can to sort them out. In the meantime HBOS have suspended using DMX and advisers should revert back to sending post directly to HBOS. All HBOS addresses and telephone numbers can be found in the Contacting Creditors pages which has been circulate with this edition of IMA News. If advisers have any questions about this or they would like to highlight any problems they have had with DMX they should contact Alex MacDermott at alex.macdermott@citizensadvice.org.uk or call him on 0207833 7191.

HSBC – An Update

In July HSBC asked us to pass on the following update to advisers:

“HSBC are making some positive changes to their Collections process which will benefit CAB clients. From August any new offers will be accepted as long as the clients' expenditure falls within the common financial statement's (CFS) trigger figures – this includes token offers of £1 per month. Offers will continue to be rejected if the clients' expenditure exceeds the triggers figures and no justifiable reasons are given. Please include any reasons for excesses on the financial statement for the bank to review.

If the offer is sufficient to meet a Managed Loan, then a letter will be written to the CAB to let you know which rate has been offered. HSBC currently offer rates of 0% i.e. no interest and charges and 1% and 7% over Base Rate dependant upon the client's ability to pay. The Managed Loan offers your client the opportunity to rehabilitate their banking relationship with HSBC and avoid adverse credit. Your client will need to sign and return the paperwork to HSBC for the Managed Loan to be put in place.

If the offer is too low to meet a Managed Loan, HSBC will write to you and advise that the offer has been accepted and that the account will be passed on to Metropolitan Collections Services in due course if the customer's circumstances remain unchanged. Clients should be encouraged to pay in-line with their offer of payment as soon as their financial statement is ready. If this is done the account will be taken out of the mainstream Collections' process. Your client will not receive Collections phone calls or letters but HSBC will continue to send the statutory letters to the client. HSBC will consider freezing charges and interest on a case-by-case basis. This is determined by whether the financial difficulty is long-term and any extenuating circumstances highlighted on the financial statement or attached paperwork.

If your client offers more than £10 per month and they miss one payment, HSBC will contact the CAB to give you the opportunity to contact the client or raise any issues with the bank. Upon two consecutive missed payments, your client will be contacted by HSBC to ask for an update of their situation.

If your clients' circumstances improve and they are able to increase their offer of payment advisers will need to send a new offer to HSBC.

If advisers have any queries on specific cases they can contact HSBC on their dedicated Agency Support team on 0845 6090 812."

We believe this is good news and we hope you do too: HSBC are committing to accept any CFS compliant offers, even token offers; they are going to take clients out of their dialler and letter cycles which will greatly reduce the number of contact clients receive; they are taking a very lenient view of missed payments as they will not chase any missed payments of £10 or less until the account goes to Metropolitan Collection Services; and they are offering a range of Managed Loans – including one at no extra cost whatsoever.

In regard to Managed Loans, we know that historically advisers have not been keen on accepting these loans. Indeed the 7% plus base rate is an expensive option especially given that the base rate cannot fall any further. However, the 0% Managed Loan really is quite a good product, as it puts the entire client's HSBC borrowing into one place at no extra cost. The client can then repay what they owe at a rate they can afford while still being able to keep their bank account open. The client can also make overpayments or pay off the Managed Loan in full without incurring any early repayment fees. Similarly now that base rate is only 0.5%, the 1% above base rate Managed Loan is a relatively cheap option for clients. Furthermore, given that there is no legal or statutory duty on creditors to freeze interest, it might be worth considering for some clients, as taking one out would allow them to keep their bank account open and reduce the number of default registered against them.

Obviously when base rate goes up the 1% deal might not be so attractive and we will continue to work with HSCB to see how this product could be future proofed. In the meantime if any of what HSBC have outlined does not appear to be happening for offers submitted after 1 August, please contact Alex MacDermott.

Littlewoods / Shop Direct Group Financial Services (SDGFS)

In the last edition of IMA News we told you that Littlewoods/SHDFG were reviewing their £5 minimum payment policy. We pleased to report that this review is now complete and Littlewoods/SDGFS have now agreed to accept offers as low as £1 per month. We hope that advisers find this helpful but if they come across any problems they should contact Alex MacDermott.

Lloyds Banking Group

The Lloyds Banking Group has asked us to pass on the following update...

Update on the Lloyds Banking Group

It is now several months since Lloyds TSB and HBOS started its process of integration to become the Lloyds Banking Group, dedicated to becoming the UK's most recommended bank by our customers. Whilst internally the pace of progress and change has been rapid we recognise that, for you in the debt advice sector, there has been little if any discernable change as yet and that it is very much business as usual. In fact, this is in line with our aim of avoiding any disruption to you and your clients/our customers. Nonetheless, we felt it appropriate to provide you with a brief update and to assure you that as and when any changes to process do occur you will be advised appropriately.

In the current environment, we have a particularly critical role to play in helping our customers survive through, and then recover from, this immensely challenging period. Whether in the early stages of financial difficulties; in arrears; or having defaulted, our expert, empathetic and accessible help will be critical in helping struggling customers to rebuild their lives. Where our customers turn to your organisations for help, we are equally committed to working with you. This applies to the Lloyds Banking Group overall and its constituent parts.

Internally within our Collections and Recovery world, we have appointed Directors to lead the big operational roles covering Unsecured Collections, Unsecured Recoveries, Secured Collections and Recoveries, and Customer and Business Support. These are the areas that you will have contact with and they will cover the parts of the bank that come from both the Lloyds TSB and HBOS 'heritages'.

How does this affect you?

Despite the changes mentioned above, we are still licensed and trading as two separate banks and this will continue for some time yet. This means that for customers and yourselves, it is still very much business as usual and we ask that you continue to use your established operational contact points within our organisation for day to day contact. We will tell you if anything changes.

Primarily, this means the Andover-based Financial Management Unit for Lloyds TSB cases and Retail Bank Collections for most HBOS products.

Your relationship managers:

For the time being, your overall relationship managers remain as below:

Antoinette Eaton for HBOS accounts and queries, also covering DMX

Tel: 07876 038705, e-mail antoinetteeaton@hbosplc.com

David Legg for Lloyds TSB accounts and queries

Tel: 01273 636560, e-mail david.legg@lloydstsb.co.uk

We hope that you find this brief bulletin both helpful and reassuring but do contact the relevant relationship managers if you have any queries."

Creditor Contacts

The Creditor Contacts update section is in a separate document emailed out with IMA News.

Money Advice Branch News

Anglia West

Cambridgeshire agencies have noted that they are finding their debt workers under real pressure after the demise of Cambridge & Huntingdon Law Centre. Provisional date for the next meeting is Friday December 11th.

Bob Johnson

Cornwall Branch

The June meeting heard from Paul Caddy of Marstons (the bailiffs formerly known as Drakes) who gave his usual informative talk on the progress they have made since Whistleblower debacle. Although one can't help but wonder whether anything in the enforcement world will really change until and unless we have a fee structure that rewards good rather than bad practice backed up by an association complaints procedure that has a degree of credibility.

Following that we were delighted to greet Sue Edwards from CitA who launched a really interesting section about how we can embed our policy aspirations into our day to day work.

Next meetings: Cornwall October 1st and Jan 28th

The October meeting promises to be very lively and features Peter Tutton Policy Officer from CitA and the Magistrates Court Fines Team in Cornwall.

Steve Meakin

Exeter Money Advice Group

Met in July and heard from both Bob Kingdon (1st Credit) and Ray Hatchard (Ross and Roberts, local council tax bailiffs).

With two of our traditional "hate figures" it promised to be a lively and informative meeting, both speakers were subject to polite but searching questions and they handled themselves and the questions with grace and good humour. 1st Credit have been on something of a charm offensive since their difficulties with the OFT last year and Bob was keen to report the changes made at the company. Certainly the audience had seen a marked reduction in the number of statutory demands flowing from the company. Bob said that 1st Credit had stopped the practice of using statutory demands as a speculative collection tactic but hadn't completely abandoned the practice. The implication was clear, from now on statutory demands would only be issued when there was an intention to proceed to a creditor's petition.

Ray Hatchard gave a talk on Council Tax enforcement in Devon that was most informative; Ross and Roberts clearly have an interest in establishing good relations with the advice sector and are putting a significant investment into that effort, with better liaison hopefully some of the worst excesses of enforcement can be avoided. Next meeting Exeter October 13th

Steve Meakin

Lancashire and Cumbria

Our next meeting is on Thursday 17th September at Preston Town Hall. In addition to the usual business news, IMA update and information exchange we have 2 guest speakers. Bob Kingdon, Compliance Manager from 1st Credit Limited will give a presentation around the recent changes at 1st Credit followed by a question and answer session. Following lunch (kindly sponsored by United Utilities) District Judge Michael Anson from Preston Combined Court will host an open forum question and answer session. A rare opportunity to ask a District Judge anything!

Dean Stockwell

Merseyside Branch

At the June 2009 Branch Meeting Jayne Bellis and Brian Higgins were Elected as Joint Regional Representatives. If you need to contact them their details are below:

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Tel. No. 01244 881685 (Mobile No. 0795 037 7531)

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Brian Higgins, Community Money Advice & Fuel Rights Worker, Walton CAB (North Liverpool Citizens Advice Bureaux), 37-39 Walton Road, Liverpool, L4 4AD

Tel. No. 0151 207 6974 extn. 2008 (Personal Mobile No. 0778 690 4634)

Fax No. 0151 207 4541

e-mail: brian.h@walton.northliverpoolcab.org.uk

The next **Branch Meeting** is on **Friday, 25th September 2009** (with a FREE LUNCH, courtesy of Grant Thornton) at Citizens' Advice Regional Office, Liverpool, if you have not yet received an invitation from Amy Britton at Specialist Support please get in touch with either of the Branch Representatives.

Brian Higgins

Plymouth Money Advice Group

Has not met since the last edition of IMA News.

Next Meetings: Plymouth September 10th & December 3rd

Steve Meakin

Southern Money Advice Forum

Met on 3rd September at Yateley CAB. Unfortunately our planned speaker from 1st Credit was unable to attend so we used the opportunity for a round table discussion.

Alex Macdermott, Credit Liaison Policy Officer at CA was the speaker at our June meeting. We found his presentation very informative and interactive. The recent information Alex has provided on HBOS contacts was distributed. Members hope that Alex will be able to attend a future meeting to give an update on his work. Members await further news of the IMAs work on accreditation.

SMAF next meeting Thursday 10th December in Portsmouth

Speaker Jane Phipps of SSU Consumer Credit Act Update

Sarah Carter

South Wales Group

The next meeting of the South Wales Group is on Tuesday 29th September. Eileen Kinghan from GamCare (the charity which provides advice, practical help, and counselling to address the social impact of gambling) will be explaining what support they can offer clients who have a gambling problem. And I will be providing an update on DROs and issues we are seeing on our consultancy.

Peter Madge

Yorkshire & North Lincolnshire MAG

At our July meeting Carolyn Howell gave a presentation on HMS and an update on the MRS scheme. We are proud to say that our region has had a rescue successfully go through!

This was followed by Sallie Johnson speaking about money advice qualifications and giving background details of the project, sharing the results of the baseline survey of money advisers Sallie also introduced the Accreditation of Money Advisers project – a joint venture between the IMA and Staffordshire University with funding from STTF - the results of which should be seen in Summer 2010 with online modules for advisers to complete.

Our discussions included the new Statutory Debt Repayment Plans in the Consumer White Paper - now apparently subject to a hold-up in Government, news from the IMA conference, and concern at the growth of online payday advance schemes at high APRs such as www.wonga.com and www.toothfairyfinance.com which get a borrower's permission to deduct significant sums direct from a bank account.

The new Debt and Mental Health Evidence Form and the Moneymadeclear website were commended to the group following the positive experiences of colleagues.

In an attempt to bring advisers together from all over our region, our next meeting on the 3rd November, will be held jointly with Sheffield Advisers Group and will take place at Grant Thornton's office at 2 Broadfield Court, S8 0XF. The meeting will include a speaker from the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission plus additional one or two guest speakers. The meeting will run over a full day (will the Sheffielders go the distance, watch this space!)

Anthony Dockray

The next edition of IMA news will be issued in December 09

If there is something you think we should include please contact me:

sallie.johnson@i-m-a.org.uk