

December 2006 / January 2007

How to avoid debt at Christmas

IS DEBT A PROBLEM AT CHRISTMAS?

Christmas puts a great strain on the family budget. There is enormous pressure on everyone to spend a lot on presents and entertaining. It is particularly difficult if you have children who want the latest and most expensive toy because they have seen it on the television and "everyone else has got one".

There is a huge increase in people seeking debt advice and assistance in January, February and March each year, when people start to feel the effects of having missed payments on essential bills to fund the festive season.

PLANNING AHEAD

- ◆ Draw up a personal budget to work out how much you have to pay out on all your essentials and make sure you have these covered.
- ◆ Make sure all your priority bills are being paid, e.g. mortgage/rent, gas, electricity, water, council tax and housekeeping.
- ◆ If you can decide how much you can afford to spend at Christmas in advance and stick to it, you are less likely to skip payments on essential bills, which will need catching up with in the New Year.
- ◆ Try to spread payments for presents over as long a time as possible, so lump sums do not have to be paid all at once.
- ◆ Try to avoid expensive credit offers in shops, no matter how tempting they may seem.

HELPFUL HINTS

- ◆ Keep within your budget.
- ◆ If you have children, try and explain why you cannot afford expensive presents for Christmas.
- ◆ Leave Christmas shopping as late as you can, since you may be able to find last minute bargains.
- ◆ Shop around for bargains on food shopping.
- ◆ Start out with an idea of how much in total you want to spend on presents. Decide who you will get presents for. Then divide the present money by the number of people to get an idea of how much to spend on each person.

FOR FREE, CONFIDENTIAL AND NON-JUDGMENTAL ADVICE ON CREATING A BUDGET and DEALING WITH DEBTS – contact RELEASE (Financial) Charitable Trust on 01773 306289 or 07854 296344.

PLEASE SEE OUR WEB-SITE -

www.releaseonline.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 1110731 RELEASE (Financial)
Charitable Trust Licensed by the Office of Fair Trading No.
576547 - Debt Adjusting/Counselling