



Helping customers with their water bills

Welcome to the new edition of our newsletter for the debt advisor community across the North West. In this edition we've provided an update on how we're helping our pensioner customers with their bills when we've been unable to fit a water meter. Our outreach team has also been out and about, raising awareness of our affordability support schemes at a number of organisations across the region. As ever, if you have an event coming up that you'd like us to attend, please get in touch with us using the contact details at the end of this newsletter.

Out and about with our Outreach Team

Our Outreach Team have had some great success with local partners over the last few months, visiting a number of organisations to speak to customers face-to-face about our affordability schemes to help them get back on track with their water bill payments.

First up, we visited local **Job Centres** in Leyland and Crewe to offer face-to-face appointments with customers on low incomes to offer support with their water bills. We've already received great feedback that some customers we've met have made significant savings on their bills through our support schemes.

We are also continuing to support ongoing **Cadent Foundation** projects across the North West, helping customers with their water bills alongside other organisations offering energy, benefit, employment and money advice. Events in Ellesmere Port, Fazakerley, Rochdale and Runcorn brought together various organisations to offer support on a range of issues.

We also attended a job club at the **Sahara Project** in Preston. Sahara is a voluntary organisation working predominantly for the benefit of the black and minority

ethnic community. The session allowed us to promote water meters as an easy way to reduce water bills depending on the number of people living in the home. A translator was also in attendance to translate our presentation for the benefit of the attendees.



We were also invited along to the **Ukrainian Community Hub** in Liverpool to help visitors to the Hub with their water bills, alongside representatives from the local council, housing and Job Centre. We are also fortunate to have a Ukrainian speaker in our team who was able to translate for those customers who had difficulty with the English language.



Upcoming events

Over the next few months you can catch up with our Outreach Team at the following events:

June 10th – Liverpool Carers event at the Carers Centre, Edge Lane Liverpool

June 24th – Fuel Poverty Event at the Brickfield Centre Liverpool

June 28th – Energy saving session, Littleborough library, Rochdale

July 23rd – Operation Respect, Carlisle

Aug 21st – Operation Respect, Whitehaven



Water meters and our pensioner community

Water meters are one of the easiest ways to reduce water bills. Most customers save at least £100 a year compared to their existing bills. We fit them for free and customers have two years to trial the meter to see how much they save. You can find full details about meters and how to apply on our website.

[More about water meters](#)

However, there are instances when it's difficult to fit a meter. This can happen if the customer shares their water supply with neighbours, or the internal plumbing makes it impossible to fit a meter.

When this happens we offer customers an 'assessed charge' (AVC). This is a fixed annual charge which is based on the type of property the customer lives in, or whether they live alone. If the AVC is lower than their existing bill, we transfer them to the AVC automatically.

This year, we're making some changes to our AVC tariff to make bills more affordable for our pensioner customers when we're unable to fit a meter.

Eligibility for our new 'pensioner AVC' tariff is limited to customers aged 66 or above, who either live alone or as a couple (and both customers must be aged 66 or above). It is only offered to customers when we've been unable to fit a meter.

If you need any further details please get in touch with us using the contact details at the end of this newsletter.



Help to keep the Hub up to date

The Hardship Hub has gone from strength to strength since it opened to everyone across the North West.

The Hub – originally created to assist debt advisors when helping clients to find the most appropriate support in their area – contains information on hundreds of schemes from various organisations including housing associations, energy companies, charities and local authorities. Please remember to recommend the website to anyone you feel would benefit from finding support in their local area.

If your organisation is featured on the Hub, please take a few minutes to check that your content is still up to date and contact the website if you need to make any changes.

We're always keen to hear examples of how your clients may have obtained help via the Hardship Hub, so please let us know if you have any good news to share. You can find our contact details at the end of this newsletter to get in touch with us.

[Visit the Hardship Hub](#)

Get in touch

You play a key role in identifying and supporting people across the North West who are struggling with debt and we hope that by working together, we can provide support to even more customers who need help with their water bills.

If you'd like to get in touch with our Outreach Team, or are keen for us to attend an event you are organising to talk to customers about our support schemes, please use the contact form on our website.

[You can catch up on our previous newsletters here.](#)

Contact the outreach team



Water for the North West

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Registered in England and Wales

Company number: 02366678

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