

A man with short brown hair and a beard, wearing a red and black plaid shirt over a white t-shirt, is sitting on the floor in a living room. He is looking down at a laptop and holding a document. The room has a bookshelf in the background, a wooden coffee table, and a lamp. The lighting is warm and natural.

# PAYPLAN'S 2021 SUMMARY REPORT



# FOREWORD

by Rachel Duffey, PayPlan CEO

It's been an unprecedented few years, and economic instability looks set to continue for a while yet. People's pockets have been hit hard recently with government support packages coming to an end and the removal of the Universal Credit uplift.

Now, with inflation causing a large rise in everyday living costs, it's no surprise there's been a significant increase in people reaching out for help with their debts.

The figures speak for themselves – throughout the latter part of the year, we've seen a 28% increase in people coming to us for debt advice (compared to the same period for 2019), with figures showing this trend is expected to continue.

We speak to people – from all walks of life - everyday. The stories we hear are sobering. Often people will be dealing with debt worries coupled with poor mental health, so it's important our advisers are fully trained in spotting the signs that someone may need extra support.

Our recent Autumn Income Shock report laid bare the awful reality for many people in the UK today; we've spoken to parents who can't afford to put food on the table, families who've seen their household incomes wiped out by the pandemic and elderly people struggling to afford gas and electricity to heat their homes.

It's important for people to remember that they're not alone. Making that first step to reach out and get help can be a big one, but the results can be life changing. Our clients have told us time and time again that just talking to someone about their debt worries helps ease the burden.

## SO WHAT HAVE WE DONE TO HELP?

We've opened new communication channels to ensure we can reach wider audiences, and worked closely with our expert referral partners, to encourage early engagement, ensuring people get the help they need sooner.

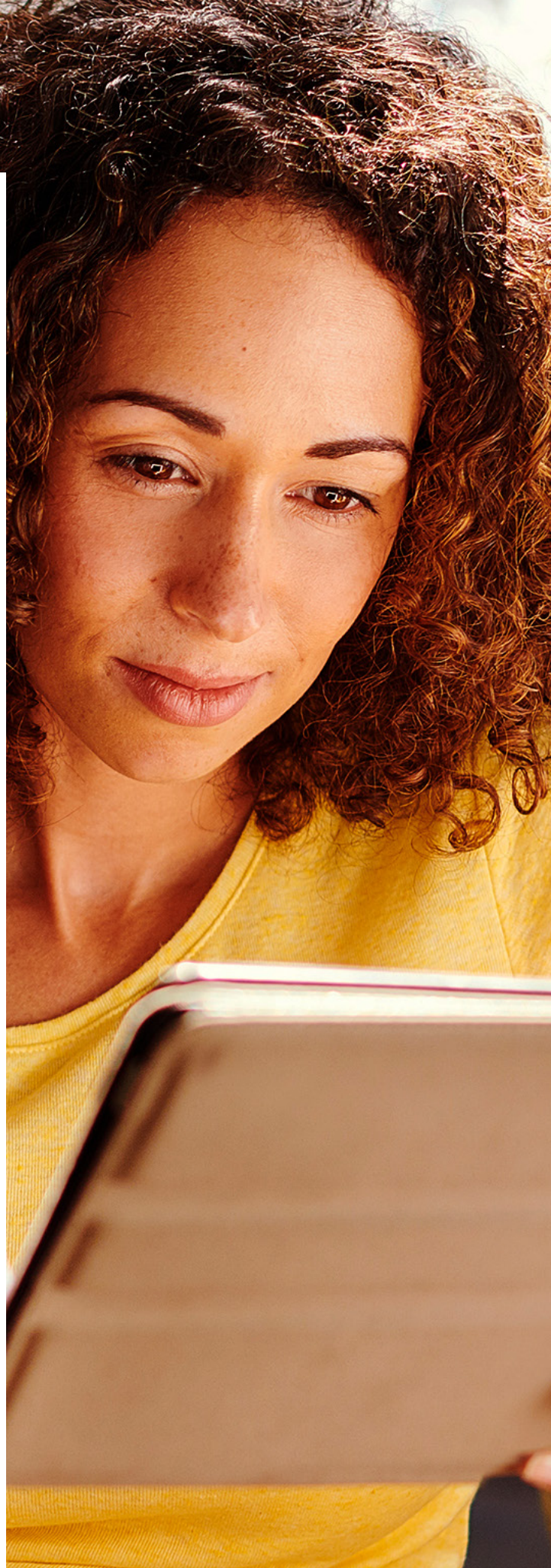
The introduction of the Breathing Space scheme in May saw us establish a new team, who, to date, have helped hundreds of clients set up a relief period to give them some time to get a plan in place for their debts and protect them from any pending legal action.

What follows is a closer look at some of our key achievements from 2021.

None of this would have been possible without the dedication of our advisers and the wider team, who continue to rise to new challenges, excel in their efforts and work tirelessly for our clients every day.

We look forward to helping more people become debt-free and financially secure in 2022.

**Rachel Duffey, CEO, PayPlan**







## WORKING WITH PARTNERS IN BOTH THE CREDITOR AND CHARITY SECTORS

We've continued to build on our relationships with our existing referral partners throughout 2021 and we've formed new relationships to get vulnerable people both the debt help and the emotional support they need sooner.

### **DOMESTIC ABUSE**

We've worked with national domestic abuse charity, Refuge, to create a safe pathway to enable domestic abuse charities to safely refer survivors over to us for debt advice. Our joint report will be published in the new year and provides a best practice protocol to roll out across the industry.

We now work with a total of ten different domestic abuse charities and have helped many clients get back on track with their finances in a confidential, sensitive manner that ensures their safety is put first.

### **SURVIVING ECONOMIC ABUSE**

As a result of the success of our partnership with Refuge, we were approached by Surviving Economic Abuse and Money Advice Plus to pilot their Economic Abuse Evidence Form.

- Since 19th October, we've submitted 12 Economic Abuse Evidence Forms on behalf of clients to their creditors – seven of which have already had their debts written off
- The timescales for these write-off decisions range from 4 days to a fortnight – considerably shorter than other debt write-off requests

"For victim-survivors of economic abuse, debt can feel like an invisible chain which links them to a perpetrator. The process of getting that debt written off can be traumatic, which is why the Economic Abuse Evidence Form, developed in partnership by Surviving Economic Abuse and Money Advice Plus, is so important. It's amazing to see PayPlan put the form into use - to hear the difference that it is already making to the victim-survivors they work with and to their team."

**Dr Nicola Sharp-Jeffs OBE, CEO and Founder of Surviving Economic Abuse**

"We look forward to watching the progress and to be continuing our work with PayPlan to support and improve outcomes for victim-survivors of economic abuse."

**Karen Perrier, CEO of Money Advice**

### **BIPOLAR UK**

Looking forward to 2022, we'll be partnering with Bipolar UK. Bipolar UK is a national mental health charity, dedicated to supporting individuals with the much misunderstood condition of bipolar, as well as supporting their families and carers.

"At Bipolar UK, we know that many of our community struggle with money and debt-management, especially if they've been through a period of impulsive spending due to a bipolar high or if they're unable to work because their symptoms are currently unstable. We're looking forward to working with PayPlan so we can signpost people to a team who can give them the understanding and support they need."

**Simon Kitchen, CEO of Bipolar UK**

## **GAMCARE**

In August, we strengthened our existing relationship with GamCare - the UK's leading provider of free information, advice and support for anyone harmed by gambling. We set up a pilot referral partnership with the charity's Leeds Community Gambling Service to help people struggling with debt. We will continue building on our relationship in 2022, setting up a referral pathway that allows our advisers to hotkey refer clients to GamCare's Helpline too.

"It's excellent news that we've moved onto the next stage in our work with the respected charity GamCare. Debt advice is an important part of reducing gambling-related financial harms. A warm referral into advice is an effective way of ensuring our services are joined-up and welcoming. Our goal is to make advice as comfortable and as easy to access for GamCare clients as we can. We look forward to building up this alliance in the coming months and years."

**Alistair Chisholm, Head of Advice Sector Policy and Partnerships, PayPlan**

## **NEW CREDITOR REFERRAL PARTNERS**

We've also formed more relationships with creditor referral partners and have this year welcomed 20 new PayPlan Partners on board, including Zopa, Hoist and Vanquis, who join most major high street lenders in referring their customers for debt advice.

"PayPlan are an integral part of our Collections journey, integrated into most of our online and digital assist content. Over the past two years, our referral volumes to PayPlan increased and because of PayPlan's Business Continuity Plan over the pandemic, it was reassuring to see minimal impact and, importantly, consistency in customers having channels of choice which we know have served them so well."

**Strategy & Relationship Manager, High Street Bank**

"Throughout the pandemic and beyond, PayPlan have provided a continually high level of support and service to our members, ensuring access to free debt advice services at a time when people needed it most. Continuing to provide this service at such high quality as everyone, including themselves, adapted to the effects of Covid-19. A testament to the commitment and dedication of the team at PayPlan. A fantastic job as always."

**Senior Manager, High Street Building Society**





## TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

We're continuing to provide market-leading training and support for third parties –

- We've delivered our Domestic Abuse training to over 600 advisers, and adapted our material to include Economic Abuse, following the changes made to the Domestic Abuse Act in April 2020.
- Our Vulnerability training has been delivered to over 150 advisers, to raise awareness and support best practice when it comes to identifying vulnerable customers and ensuring their needs are met.
- We've trained over 240 advisers on debt solutions, to raise awareness and best practice, and provided other awareness training – including regulatory change – to 196 attendees to ensure best outcomes.
- We've also trained 2000 creditor agents. Our training has proven to be highly effective, with a 173% uplift in referrals following sessions with major high street lenders.



# KEY HIGHLIGHTS

## NEW REFERRAL ROUTE FOR MPs



We've launched a new Constituency Debt Advice Hotline and digital referral method for Members of Parliament (MPs) to provide easy access to debt advice and support for their constituents.

## DEBT WRITE-OFF



We've worked with creditors to write off £1.2 million of debt for vulnerable clients who have terminal illnesses, lifelong conditions or other debilitating circumstances.

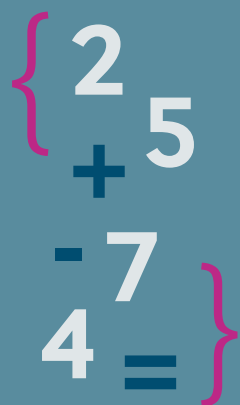
## BREATHING SPACE



PayPlan have facilitated Breathing Space for over 1,500 clients.

An overwhelming majority of clients told us that using Breathing Space had a positive impact on their mental health and financial situation.

## PARTNERSHIP WITH PLAIN NUMBERS



We've joined forces with Plain Numbers, an organisation dedicated to helping firms support their customers who struggle with numbers and data.

The new partnership will allow us to better serve our clients by presenting numbers and data in a totally new way to increase engagement with debt advice and improve levels of understanding.

## AUTUMN INCOME SHOCK REPORT



We conducted our Autumn Income Shock report and shared this with the Government to inform them of the financial challenges people are facing with the ever-increasing cost of living.

## LAUNCH OF PAYPLAN CHAMPIONS



We launched our PayPlan Champions initiative to encourage creditor agents to refer customers in financial difficulty to debt advice, which has been a resounding success!

Our Champions Christmas party celebrated the achievements of the top referrers – and enabled them to see how they've truly changed lives for the better.

## 'DEBT DOESN'T DISCRIMINATE' CAMPAIGN



Inspired by the research carried out by Debt Free London, we launched our 'Debt Doesn't Discriminate' campaign to break down barriers that prevent some people from accessing debt help.

We shared stories from our own advisers of their debt experiences, to encourage more people to reach out for support and to show how anyone can be impacted by financial hardship.



## WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY:

"I really felt I had nowhere to turn to and I came very close to taking my own life. I searched for help and came across PayPlan. I was very nervous about contacting them, but they soon put me at ease and now I'm getting the help I need. I can't praise them enough."

"I can't begin to tell you how helpful PayPlan have been. Covid put my life into a living financial hell, but with the help and guidance from PayPlan I can finally see light at the end of a very dark tunnel. Don't leave your debts to stack up - talk to PayPlan, they're amazing."

"I spoke with Jennifer from PayPlan who offered a lot of support and advice regarding my debt. I feel like a huge weight has been lifted off my shoulders."

"I've been putting off having this conversation for years, but I'm so glad I made it today. The adviser that I spoke to, Sam, was the most helpful person I have ever spoken to and made me feel at ease from the moment we started speaking. I never thought I would feel this much lighter and brighter when it came to financial issues."

"PayPlan are very professional and very easy to talk to. All the staff are professional, make you feel at ease and won't judge you no matter what the circumstances are."



We've had **over 100,000 new clients** approach PayPlan for **help in 2021**



Each month, **hundreds of clients** have completed their plans and **become debt free**



In 2021, we have helped **clients** to repay **over £160 million of debt**





## CHRIS' STORY – CASE STUDY

**“You won’t be the first in your situation – or the last. PayPlan advisers will use their experience to help you – and you won’t regret reaching out.”**

Chris contacted PayPlan after the breakdown of his marriage. He works in the Police Force and was concerned being in debt may affect his career.

### **DISCOVERING THE AMOUNT OF DEBT HE WAS IN FOLLOWING HIS MARRIAGE BREAKDOWN**

Chris’ debt was mostly from credit cards, which had accumulated over the years. What he didn’t realise though was that his wife, who controlled their finances at the time, had also fallen into arrears. It was only after their relationship ended that Chris learnt, and was shocked to realise, the full extent of his debt.

**“My minimum payments were more than what I was actually earning. I was unable to pay my mortgage and family were unable to help me.”**

Chris’ mental health was also affected:

**“Not being able to afford a coffee or some food at work, worrying about not being able to afford to put fuel in the car to see parents and friends was taking a real toll on my mental state.”**

### **TAKING THAT FIRST STEP TO GET DEBT ADVICE**

Chris followed the advice of The Police Federation and made a call to us. He completed a budget with his adviser, who decided a Debt Management Plan (DMP) was the most suitable solution based on his circumstances.

He found that although it was tough getting by without previous luxuries, it was totally worth it to be debt-free and Chris feels the DMP was the best option for him.

**“I was still able to live my life whilst repaying my debts. I had a son with my new fiancée during the DMP and we needed a bigger house - I was able to secure a new mortgage to accommodate our growing family.”**

### **A DEBT-FREE LIFE AND NEW FUTURE AHEAD**

Chris and his fiancée now manage their finances together and are currently saving for the wedding.

**“I am a big believer about being open and honest about debt. It may be daunting, stressful and in my case, I was worried about my career. But you don’t need to worry. Have a chat with PayPlan, they will give you honest advice. It can be the turning point in your life and make you see the light.”**







Debt Advice Provider of the Year Award  
Vulnerability Champion (Emma Gibbons)  
Business Continuity Award



Debt Advice Provider of the Year Award



Vulnerability Lead of the Year (Emma Gibbons)  
Rising Star of the Year (Iona Murray)

[payplan.com](https://payplan.com)



PayPlan is a trading name of Totemic Limited. Totemic Limited is a limited company registered in England, Company Number: 2789854.  
Registered Office: Kempton House, Dysart Road, PO Box 9562, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 0EA. Totemic Limited is authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority.  
Financial Conduct Authority Number: 681263. Totemic, the Totemic logo, PayPlan and the PayPlan Logo are all trademarks of Totemic Limited.