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FAO: LOCAL REPORTERS

Thursday 27th April 2017

SNP MSP FOR KIRKCALDY CALLS FOR ACTION TO HELP THOSE WITH PROBLEM DEBT

David Torrance MSP has backed calls from StepChange Debt Charity to expand the reach of Scotland's existing Debt Arrangement Scheme – which freezes interest and charges while someone pays off their debts – better support hard-pressed households who have fallen into financial difficulty.

A report by StepChange Debt Charity, the largest provider of free over-the-phone debt advice in the UK, Scotland in the Red, showed that record numbers of Scottish clients had contacted the charity for help with debts in 2016.

The average debt of people contacting StepChange from Kirkcaldy was £8,647. The average debt of StepChange clients across all of Scotland was £12,677.

The DAS already helps thousands of Scots every year by freezing their interest and charges, and stopping enforcement action by creditors, but some people in temporary financial difficulty are not able to get guaranteed protections.

Commenting, SNP MSP for Kirkcaldy Constituency, David Torrance, said:

“I'm very concerned that record numbers are contacting StepChange for debt help. Too many people are borrowing just to get by, struggling to save, working hard and finding it difficult to make ends meet.

“With more people falling into debt, we need to make sure that we do as much as possible at Holyrood to help those who have had a temporary financial setback, like the loss of a job or the death of a family member”

“Some people in Kirkcaldy and Scotland already have access to the best protections in the UK, thanks to the Debt Arrangement Scheme – but we can and should go further to help more people.

“Expanding the Debt Arrangement Scheme would give people time to get back on their feet without the worry of their debts spiralling out of control. It would give people the best chance of getting themselves back into a position where they can start making payments on their debts.”

ENDS

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