

A Guide for Customers Experiencing Financial Difficulties

We're here to help

If you're having trouble paying your mortgage, or think that you might experience a problem doing so in the near future, we have a number of options that may offer a solution for your circumstances.

Please call us on 0113 225 7972 between 8am to 8pm weekdays Monday to Thursday, 8am to 5:30pm on Friday, or Saturday between 9am to 12.30pm.

What we will do to help you:

- Contact you as soon as possible if you miss a payment or we learn of any financial difficulty.
- Complete a Budget Planner with you so that we understand your current financial position.
- Assess your situation and where possible, arrange a payment plan with you that suits both of us.
- Discuss what free debt advice options are available through other organisations (please note, we can't offer advice about, or help with debts you may have elsewhere).
- Talk to someone else regarding your situation provided we have your authority to do so.
- Only start repossession proceedings if we can't solve the problem with you, having explored all possible alternatives.

We might be able to:

- Change the way you make your payments, or the date you make them.
- Change the type of mortgage you have.
- Allow you to pay back your mortgage over a longer term.
- Transfer your mortgage to a different rate of interest.
- Give you reasonable time to repay your arrears.
- Capitalise your arrears onto your outstanding mortgage balance.
- Help you to sell the mortgage property.

If we can make one or more of these arrangements with you, we'll explain how it works and give you time to consider it. If we can't offer you any of these options, we'll tell you why.

You may want to talk to a professional advisor, such as a debt counsellor or a financial advisor, before making any changes to your mortgage. We would strongly recommend that you seek independent advice.

What you should do:

- Contact us quickly if we try to contact you.
- Provide us with details of your income and outgoings when we ask you to.
- Make sure you keep everybody responsible for the mortgage, including anyone guaranteeing it, up to date with what's happening.
- Check whether you're entitled to any government benefits which could help to increase your income. Depending on where you live there are government schemes that offer help if you can't pay your mortgage. You can get further information from the Money Advice Service detailed below.

- If you have an insurance policy, such as income protection or mortgage payment protection, check whether this could help with your payments.
- Tell us if you move home or change your contact details.
- Seek, free debt advice from one of the following organisations if you want help managing your finances.

Free debt advice organisations:

- **Citizens Advice Bureau** you can locate your local bureau at www.citizensadvice.org.uk
- **StepChange** 0800 138 1111 or www.stepchange.org
- **National Debtline** 0808 808 4000 or www.nationaldebtline.org
- **Money Advice Service** 0800 138 7777 or www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en
- **Money Advice Scotland** 0141 572 0237 or www.moneyadvicescotland.org.uk

Costs and charges:

If your mortgage is in arrears, we may charge you for reasonable administrative or legal costs we incur; this is in line with our standard tariff of mortgage charge. We will tell you about any charges added to your mortgage.

If we can't agree a solution:

- If we can't get in touch with you we may send a field agent to visit you. The cost of the visit may be charged to your mortgage account.
- We may start court proceedings to repossess your home. This does not necessarily mean that we will repossess your home as we'll keep trying to solve the problem with you. Repossession is a last resort.
- If the property is repossessed you will remain liable for the total loan outstanding. If we sell the property and the sale proceeds aren't enough to pay the loan in full then you will need to repay any outstanding amount.

Other issues:

Some companies may offer you new loans or even invite you to sell your property to them and then rent it back as a way of resolving your short-term financial difficulty. Please be careful, as such actions may not be in your long-term best interests. We would advise you to seek independent advice before entering into any arrangement of this type.

You may be thinking about handing your keys over to us. If you do this, you will still owe us any outstanding debt, and we would recommend you discuss this option with us before taking such action.

We supply information to a credit reference agency on a monthly basis and any arrears or repossession action on your mortgage may result in a negative credit reference which could affect your ability to obtain credit in the future.