**Council Tax: Check to Save Campaign 2020**

**Social media and digital toolkit**

#

# Summary

Debt is a huge issue for our clients. In 2018/19, more than 110,000 debt-related issues were brought to bureaux, demonstrating the volume and complexity of the advice required to help clients navigate their debt.

The clients we see speak to us about a huge range of debt issues, from credit card and utilities debt through to payday loans and overdrafts. In the last year, the biggest debt issue is Council Tax debt, a growing problem for our clients. Since 2013 this area of debt advice has grown by 6% and this may be an indication of people not paying council tax to prioritise other outgoings (but not necessarily just other debts, could be to be pay for essentials like food).

Ultimately, we know that people in Scotland who use our advice services often don’t have enough money to make ends meet and this perpetuates the cycle of debt. This campaign aims to create a space for people to talk about their Council Tax debt and to investigate their entitlements.

**Research from CAS tells us;**
You can use these facts in your campaigning, but only DURING the campaign fortnight.

In 2019 the Citizens Advice network in Scotland:

* Provided **22,648** pieces of advice on Council Tax
* Provided **17,163** pieces of advice on Council Tax debt

The people who have turned to us for help with council tax debt **owe a combined £6.9 million.** During 2019 almost 2,250 bureaux clients received advice in relation to over £6.9 million in council tax related debt. Averaged across those clients, that’s over £3,000 per person.

**This year’s campaign will run from Monday 2nd March – Sunday 15th March**. This toolkit provides guidance and tips for your social media campaign throughout the campaign, to support you in achieving the campaign’s objectives.
**For partner organisations or groups:** you may want to promote the campaign or our resources to encourage engagement and participation.

**Campaign objectives**

* Raise awareness of council tax debt as an issue for our clients and public and empower people to take action.
* Raise awareness of council tax reduction, discounts and exemption – which remain under claimed compared to the system it replaced in 2013.
* Promote our online Council Tax tool to the public and promote better use of the tool in a bureau setting.

**Social media objectives**

* Increase brand awareness of The Citizens Advice Network in Scotland as an aid to help those in council tax debt
* Increase social community following and accurately target audiences
* Strengthen engagement to increase client loyalty

**General guidance**

This toolkit will help you plan and create content for your social media channels that will then be used to meet both the campaign and social media objectives. It is designed to support you in promoting the key campaign messages and to direct the consumers to the public advice site.

* This year, we are using the tagline: **Check to save on your Council Tax**
* The national social media campaign will run on Facebook and Twitter. However, if there is another social media channel that you utilise, you can adapt the content as you see fit.
* Search for the hashtag **#CheckToSave** on Twitter or Facebook to join the conversation.
No matter how much time you have, you can get involved by re-posting, re-tweeting and sharing content.

**Hashtag guidance**

* Use **#CheckToSave**
* Use the hashtag to join the conversation and to ensure your content appears under the **#** on social channels.
* You can search the hashtag on both Twitter and Facebook to find content you would like to share and comment on.

**Top tips for responding to users on social media**

When posting on social media, you also have a responsibility to ensure users on your social channels are responded to and provided information as requested.

* **Make time:** Social media management can be time-consuming, but when you are campaigning, you should map out a segment of your day that you can use to engage with users and respond to comments. Think of a social media user in the same way a client in your CAB, they have needs in the same way.
* **Creating responses**: What is your bureau position and advice on this issue and what to do you want to articulate to users? Remember to be consistent and you can create draft responses before you post on social media, so you are prepared.
* **Draft response example:** Thank you for sharing your experience of council tax with us. Book an appointment or attend one of our drop-in sessions where an adviser would be more than happy to provide advice.
* **Difficult users:** One of the biggest apprehensions to posting on social media is often the fear of negative or difficult users on your social channels. The topic of council tax could provoke an emotional response and oftentimes, social media is the one place that people can vent their frustrations. If you have a negative response from a user, follow these steps:
	+ - 1. Respond as quickly as you can, this will help to diffuse a situation.
			2. Take time to read over the person’s comment; are they asking you a question or are they being purposefully negative? If they are asking a question, respond calmly and politely. You are there to provide further information, so you can direct the user to the public advice site.
			3. Encourage user’s to send you a private message, if you can, to take any negativity off your public social media channels. This will give you another avenue to discuss in a constructive manner.
			4. Remember key messages, your role when promoting the campaign on social media is to help people with their energy issues.
			5. If they are being threatening, swearing or insulting language, delete the comment and block the user – in no capacity should you accept offensive behaviour.

**Template posts**

**Council Tax: Check to save 2020** launches on Monday 2nd March to media. **Until this time, template posts should not be used on social media, press or any other media channel.**

You can promote the campaign to create a sense of excitement and a template post for this type of activity is in the template post pack suite below.

We would recommend you promote the campaign as much as possible throughout the week, with at least three posts each week to engage with target demographics.

**Quick actions:**

 **Add this to your email footer/signature:**

* Find out if you could be paying less on your council tax 👉[www.checkmycounciltax.scot](http://www.checkmycounciltax.scot)
Check now, check to save [www.cas.org.uk/checktosave](http://www.cas.org.uk/checktosave)

 **Twitter & Facebook:**

* Our **Council Tax: Check to save campaign** kicks off on Monday 2nd March 2020. Find out how you can save money on your council tax bill at [insert your URL] **#CheckToSave**
* Next week, we’re going to be campaigning in our local area to help you check if you could be paying less council tax. [details about your event or where people could get more information]

# Actions if you have more time

**Promote the campaign to local partners**
**Promote what to bring to an appointment** – link [here](https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/scotland/about-us/what-to-bring-to-a-bureau/#h-employment-problems)

**Conversation starter:** In 2019, the Citizens Advice network in Scotland gave 17,163 pieces of advice on Council Tax debt.
We want to raise awareness around council tax debt and the reductions people are entitled to.
Are struggling to pay your council tax?
To find out more 👉 [www.cas.org.uk/checktosave](http://www.cas.org.uk/checktosave)

**Twitter & Facebook**Social media posts for use throughout the campaign. Launch day is Monday 2nd March. **You can adapt which URL link to use in the posts. Either the CAB’s, CAS’s or the council tax tool.**

**Please feel free to adapt the content to show the public how your bureau can help them with council tax and debt by adding where they can find your bureau or call to receive help.**

* Today we launch our Council Tax: Check to save campaign

In 2019, the Citizens Advice network in Scotland gave 17,163 pieces of advice on Council Tax debt

We want to empower people to take action

Check now to see if you can get money off your council tax 👉[www.checkmycounciltax.scot](http://www.checkmycounciltax.scot)

* Check if you could be paying less on your council tax bill 👉[www.checkmycounciltax.scot](http://www.checkmycounciltax.scot)
Use our tool to see if you are eligible for a discount, exemption or reduction #CheckToSave
For more info 👉 [www.cas.org.uk/checktosave](http://www.cas.org.uk/checktosave)
* Use our tool to check if you can save money on your council tax

👉www.checkmycounciltax.scot

Or visit your local bureau for help dealing with council tax debt 👉www.cas.org.uk/bureaux

#CheckToSave

* Living on your own?
Are you claiming 25% off your council tax bill with a ‘single occupancy discount’?
Use our tool to check if you can save money on your council tax 👉www.checkmycounciltax.scot

Visit your local bureau for further advice 👉www.cas.org.uk/bureaux

#CheckToSave

* Are you a full-time student? Or are you living with a student?
Make sure you are claiming a discount on your council tax
Use our tool to check if you can save money 👉[www.checkmycounciltax.scot](http://www.checkmycounciltax.scot)
#CheckToSave
* Have you checked with your older relatives too see if they are eligible for money off their council tax?
Use our tool to check if they could be paying less council tax 👉www.checkmycounciltax.scot

Visit your local bureau for further advice 👉www.cas.org.uk/bureaux

#CheckToSave

* Talking about Council Tax isn’t exciting, but it’s always a good feeling to know you could be eligible for money off your bill

Pop in for a chat at your nearest bureau
Use our tool to check if you can save money on your council tax 👉[www.checkmycounciltax.scot](http://www.checkmycounciltax.scot)

* Get help with your council tax debt and pop into your local bureau

Our awesome advisers offer impartial, confidential and free advice
👉www.cas.org.uk/bureaux

#CheckToSave

* Find out if you could be paying less on your council tax 👉[www.checkmycounciltax.scot](http://www.checkmycounciltax.scot)

Check now #CheckToSave
For more info 👉 [www.cas.org.uk/checktosave](http://www.cas.org.uk/checktosave)

* Do you live with someone you care for 35 hours a week and receive carers allowance?
You could be eligible to pay less or no council tax!
Check now 👉[www.checkmycounciltax.scot](http://www.checkmycounciltax.scot)
Visit your local bureau for further advice 👉[www.cas.org.uk/bureaux](http://www.cas.org.uk/bureaux)
* Does someone you know or an older relative receiving long term care in a hospital or care home?
Make sure they are claiming an exemption on their council tax
Pop in for a chat [insert your URL]
#CheckToSave
* Have you heard about a ‘disability related band reduction’ on your council tax?
If you or someone you know are living with a disability, they could be paying less council tax
Check now 👉[www.checkmycounciltax.scot](http://www.checkmycounciltax.scot)
Visit your local bureau for further advice 👉[www.cas.org.uk/bureaux](http://www.cas.org.uk/bureaux)
* Did you know you can claim both a discount and a reduction off your council tax?
Get clued up on the how and why
Use our tool to check 👉[www.checkmycounciltax.scot](http://www.checkmycounciltax.scot)
Visit your local bureau for further advice 👉[www.cas.org.uk/bureaux](http://www.cas.org.uk/bureaux)
* We want to raise awareness around council tax debt and the reductions people are entitled to
Pop in for a chat [insert your URL] and get help with your council tax
Our awesome advisers offer impartial, confidential and free advice
#CheckToSave
* If your struggling with council tax debt, check if you could be claiming a reduction to prevent council tax debt accumulating
Visit your local bureau for further advice 👉[www.cas.org.uk/bureaux](http://www.cas.org.uk/bureaux)
Our advisers offer impartial, confidential and free advice
#CheckToSave

**Note:** Throughout the campaign, we will be promoting national media around. You can check the CAS national Facebook and Twitter pages for updates throughout the campaign period.

# Imagery

* We have created social media graphics that you can use during the campaign. They will be sent to you by email (if you are part of the Citizens Advice Network).

 **Campaign contacts**

Emily Liddle, Campaigns Officer: emily.liddle@cas.org.uk (you will not be able to contact Emily after Wednesday 11th March)

Johanna Jamieson, social media liaison: johanna.jamieson@cas.org.uk