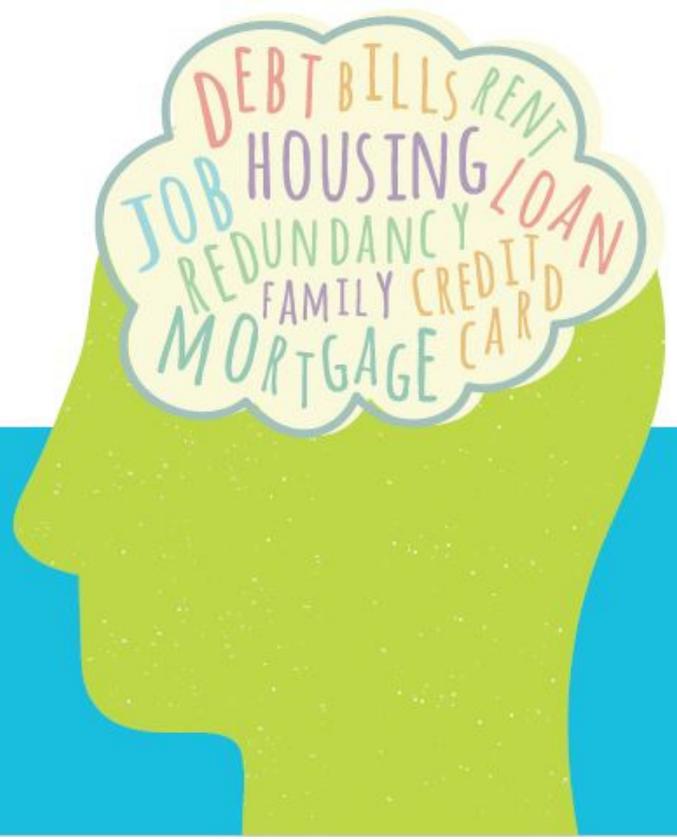


REACHING

OUT



Reaching Out - briefing note on a new communications campaign

Background:

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has had a major impact on the economy globally, nationally and in Dorset. Relative to the UK, Dorset has a higher share of employment, output and businesses across the hardest hit sectors such as tourism and leisure. The high proportion of take up of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (the furlough scheme) and the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme across Dorset highlights the overall employment exposure of the area. Almost 50,000 people in the Dorset Council area have been furloughed, of which it is estimated some 75% are aged 25 years or younger. Of these it has been estimated that 40% (15,000) may not be able to return to their former employment due to redundancies and business closures.

This is also likely to have an impact on mental health and relationships, which will be a theme that runs throughout the campaign and we will signpost to the help available.

Campaign objectives:

Dorset Council is launching a joint campaign with Citizens Advice this September.

The aim is to raise awareness of the range of support available to people financially affected by COVID-19 so they can seek advice and support before they reach crisis point. Hopefully this will result in fewer people becoming homeless, becoming ill, or hurting others.

The key themes:

The campaign will run initially until the end of March 2021, and will be structured around three themes:

- **Work and skills** - employment rights, careers advice, access to training
- **Money and home** - rent or mortgage advice, managing debt, accessing benefits, finding somewhere to live, foodbanks, other financial help
- **Health and relationships** - health & wellbeing advice including signposting to mental health and domestic abuse support.

Who do we want to reach?

For many people in Dorset, this will be the first time they have experienced such financial difficulties. We want to reach anyone who is worried about, or is facing redundancy; especially young people aged 16-25 (who are most at risk of unemployment or reduced hours); anyone struggling with finances such as paying their rent or mortgage or other bills such as car or household, education or childcare costs.

Our key messages:

- A problem shared is a problem halved – help, support and advice is available whatever challenges COVID-19 has thrown at you
- Lots of people are in the same boat - you're not alone and shouldn't be afraid to ask for help or advice, before things get more difficult
- Help is available online at www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/reaching-out
- If you would like to talk call **03444 111 444**, calls charged at a local rate
- Specialist advisers can help with immediate problems and offer advice for the longer term
- All advice is free, confidential and impartial

How are we getting the message out?

The campaign will run across a number of channels including:

- Dorsetcouncil.gov.uk
- Targeted digital advertising, including pop ups and banners
- Social media - organic and paid for
- E-newsletters
- Media relations
- Dorset Council News magazine
- Via Dorset Councillors, town and parish councils and partner organisations
- Posters at customer contact points e.g. libraries, schools, GP surgeries and pharmacies
- Customer facing council employees

We'll be featuring a series of 'experts' from partner organisations such as Citizens Advice and Job Centre Plus, as well as case studies of real people so that others can recognise and identify with situations and circumstances, prompting them to get help sooner rather than later.

Our key spokespeople



Cllr Laura Miller, Dorset Council's Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care and Health



Cllr Graham Carr-Jones, Dorset Council's Portfolio Holder for Housing



Daniel Cadisch, Lead representative for Citizens Advice.
Other people of expertise related to each topic will also be available

How can you help?

Share this campaign with friends, family and your local community. As a trusted voice, you can get the word out that help and support is available for people at this time. Watch out for our social media posts, news releases, e-newsletters and other activities.

Some examples of the assets to look out for include:



A campaign toolkit is also available on our website at www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/reaching-out

Need more information?

To find out more information, visit www.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/reaching-out, or contact Claire Lodge, Senior Communications Officer by emailing claire.lodge@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk

