



Back on Track

Tackling problem debt, together

FAQs on the new Aid & Advice Scheme for mortgage holders in arrears

There is now a State-funded Scheme in place to help people who cannot pay their debts as they fall due and who are in mortgage arrears, to access the services of a Personal Insolvency Practitioner (PIP) or other independent expert financial and legal advice.

There are three panels listing the professionals who are taking part in the Scheme:

1. a panel of personal insolvency practitioners, established and maintained by the Insolvency Service of Ireland (ISI),
2. a panel of solicitors established and maintained by the Legal Aid Board, and
3. a panel of accountants, established and maintained by the Citizens Information Board.

What is the purpose of the Scheme?

The purpose of the Scheme is to help people in serious arrears to find the best available solutions, with the help of professionals who have expert knowledge of mortgages, insolvency, bankruptcy and/or repossession. The priority will be to find a solution that keeps a person in their home, where possible.

Who is running the Scheme?

This is a State-funded Scheme which is being coordinated by the Department of Justice and Equality and the Department of Social Protection, in co-operation with other agencies including the Money Advice and Budgeting Service (“MABS”), the ISI, the Legal Aid Board, and the Citizens Information Board.

Who can avail of the Scheme?

A borrower will be eligible for advice and assistance if they are:

- insolvent;
- in mortgage arrears on his or her principal private residence; and
- at risk of losing their principal private residence;
- in a home that is not disproportionately large for their needs.

How can a person avail of the Scheme?

In order to access any advice or assistance under the Scheme, the borrower must first be assessed as eligible. This can be done in two ways:

1. A borrower can **contact a MABS office or the MABS helpline** (0761 072 000). They will carry out a short eligibility assessment and refer them to the appropriate service.
2. A borrower can **contact a PIP directly** and they will carry out an eligibility assessment. The panel of participating PIPs is available [here](#).

Borrowers will be provided with free financial advice and assistance, either by a MABS adviser or by a panel PIP or panel accountant. Where a legal issue is identified, or where the borrower is facing repossession proceedings, MABS will also be able to refer the borrower to a panel solicitor for free legal advice and assistance.

What will the PIP do for you?

The PIP will seek to identify a solution to resolve the borrower’s debt problems, keeping them in their home where it is possible to do so.

How long will the Scheme last?

This Scheme is scheduled to be available from 21 July 2016 for up to three years: it will be reviewed after 6 months and yearly thereafter. Borrowers who may be eligible for the Scheme are encouraged to seek assistance as soon as possible.