

FAQs for Maintaining Debt Advice Capacity in England (income loss): Market Engagement

Q1. I am having problems completing the market engagement survey

A1. Please email commercial@maps.org.uk with ref: 20-91 in the subject line

Q2. Is there a full list of the questions you are asking in the survey?

A2. Yes, you can download this from the 'Links' section on Contracts Finder for this notice: <https://www.contractsfinder.service.gov.uk/Notice/267c8dd2-1635-4b9a-b24d-8e4731236252>

Q3. When can I apply for this funding?

A3. We are currently (17-28 July) undertaking market engagement for this funding to help develop ideas and judge interest from potential suppliers. We will use the information gathered to inform the next steps. We'd expect any future application process linked to this market engagement would place in August. This will be announced via MaPS's stakeholder newsletter, website and via Contracts Finder

Q4. How much funding is available?

A4. There are some interdependencies between this funding stream and others, but we anticipate funding for this strand to be in the region of £5m. We are undertaking market engagement to understand interest from the sector for support with income loss.

Q5. Why is the funding only for England? Is funding available for Scotland, Wales and NI?

A5. Responsibility for debt advice funding raised through the FCA's Debt Advice Levy is devolved. MaPS has responsibility for distributing debt advice funds in England. In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland the equivalent funds are distributed by the Devolved Administrations.

Q6. Our organisation provides services UK wide, would we be eligible for funding?

A6. MaPS can only fund debt advice provision in England, so would only fund the proportion of losses covering activity in England (ie if 75% of the customers you support are based in England, we would fund no more than 75% of the loss).

Q7. Our organisation provides generalist advice services, of which debt advice is one element, would we be eligible for funding?

A7. This funding is to support debt advice providers impacted by coronavirus. If your losses are for broader generalist advice, we'd only fund the proportion related to debt advice (ie if 30% of the advice you provide is debt advice, we'd fund no more than 30% of the loss).

Q8. What types of income loss will your funding support (will IVA income or client DMP fees be in scope)?

A8. We are currently (17-28 July) undertaking a market engagement to understand the impact of income losses within the sector. The details of what types of income are in scope will be finalised after this engagement exercise. Any funding that MaPS does provide would be to support income losses that are reducing the capacity levels of free-to-customer debt advice (and the operating costs associated with delivering that advice). MaPS would not fund losses to profit.

Q9. Why isn't funding available for equipment or kit for working from home?

A9. A separate funding stream (for MaPS funded organisations) is providing advisers who do not have equipment of a suitable specification with the equipment they need to be able to access the PACE system. This opportunity is specifically to address capacity issues created by the loss of income.

Q10. On what basis would funding be made available? Would it be a loan we'd be expected to repay?

A10. We are proposing that funding would be a grant, payable monthly in arrears based on the evidence of actual loss. There are no plans for the funding to be a repayable loan.

Q11. Is this funding only available for digital or remote debt advice – or can it include face to face advice as well?

A11. We are not proposing any eligibility criteria linked to channel. However, this is a market engagement phase to understand the issues within the sector, no decisions on final eligibility criteria have been made at this stage.

Q12. Is funding going to be available to organisations who are not national?

A12. We are not proposing any eligibility criteria linked to geographical coverage within England. However, this is a market engagement phase to understand the issues within the sector, no decisions on final eligibility criteria have been made at this stage.

Q13. Will this funding be available to non-MaPS funded organisations?

A13. We are not proposing that this funding is restricted to organisations currently in receipt of MaPS funding. We are particularly keen to understand from organisations not currently within our supply chain about the issues they are facing in relation to coronavirus and income loss. However, this is a market engagement phase to understand the issues within the sector, no decisions on final eligibility criteria have been made at this stage.

Q14. What evidence would be needed from organisations to demonstrate lost funding for debt advice?

A14. As part of the market engagement survey we are asking providers about the evidence they would be able to submit to demonstrate the loss of income. However, our thinking is that we would adopt an open book accounting approach, demonstrating previous years income, forecasts and reconciling based on actual loss.

Q15. Can you give some examples of a coronavirus-related loss of income situation?

A15. Examples include regular donations that have reduced due to coronavirus, fundraising activity that wasn't able to be completed due to coronavirus, funding linked to particular debt solutions which has reduced due to coronavirus or funding dependent on successful completion of activities which have been unable to be completed due to coronavirus.

Q16. We have been unable fill a vacancy – this has resulted in loss of income. Would this count?

A16. Our proposals are that funding would be provided to support income loss as a direct result of coronavirus. Being unable to fill a vacancy is not necessarily related to coronavirus, so further details would be required to understand the link and to assess the case. However, this is a market engagement phase to understand the issues within the sector, no decisions on final eligibility criteria have been made at this stage.

Q17. What will happen if somebody has long staff sicknesses due to coronavirus? Are we still going to receive same funding?

A17. Our proposals are to provide funding to support income loss as a direct result of coronavirus. Long term staff sickness due to coronavirus would not necessarily lead to a reduced income, further details of the existing funding agreement would be required to understand the link and be able to assess the case. However, this is a market engagement phase to understand the issues within the sector, no decisions on final eligibility criteria have been made at this stage.

Q18. What about if funding was coming to an end, but we were unable to apply for new funding because of Coronavirus (as the funder we bid to has re-prioritised and is focused on Covid19 funding, and we don't know when that will start through their systems again)?

A18. Our proposal is that this funding stream is to support income that has been lost due to coronavirus and maintain current capacity levels within the debt advice sector. Our proposed payment methodology would require open book accounting to evidence the actual loss monthly. We would not be able to support income that has not already been awarded.

Q19. To maintain capacity is there an opportunity for other charities to be given the resources to increase their debt advice provision (local Citizens Advice branch)?

A19. This FAQ document is for the market engagement phase for Maintaining Debt Advice Capacity (income loss) in England. Market Engagement for the Increasing Capacity Recruitment and Training stream closed on 8 July. The market engagement phase included discussions with organisations MaPS currently funds about the capacity within their network and supply chain to increase headcount.

Any subsequent application process and eligibility criteria for this funding stream will be announced via MaPS Stakeholder newsletter, www.maps.org.uk/debt-advice-funding and via Contracts Finder.

Q20. In the increasing debt capacity stream, can you confirm that non-MAPs funded organisations will be eligible?

A20. This FAQ document is for the market engagement phase for Maintaining Debt Advice Capacity (income loss) in England. Market Engagement for the Increasing Capacity Recruitment and Training stream closed on 8 July. Our proposed criteria, set out during that engagement phase, was that this process was open to all organisations not just those currently funded by MaPS.

Any subsequent application process and eligibility criteria for this funding stream will be announced via MaPS Stakeholder newsletter, www.maps.org.uk/debt-advice-funding and via Contracts Finder.