

Personal debt  
Jan-June 2017

StepChange  
Debt Charity

Statistics

# MID -YEAR BOOK

An in-depth  
look at over  
300,000 people  
struggling with  
problem debt.

› **326,639 people**  
contacted  
StepChange Debt  
Charity for help  
and support with  
their problem debt  
from January to  
June 2017

People were most likely to contact the charity for assistance due to unemployment or redundancy (18.8%), and injury or illness (16.6%). There has been a decrease, from 20% in 2016 to 15% in the first half of 2017, in the proportion of people falling into debt problems due to lack of budgeting skills.

## What debts do people have?

**In 2016 the average unsecured debt of our clients increased for the first time in eight years. Our latest data shows this is a continuing trend in 2017.**

The average unsecured debt for our clients has risen from £14,251 in 2016 to £14,367 in the first half of 2017. On average, StepChange Debt Charity clients have 5.8 unsecured debts.

Credit cards are the most common type of debt held by our clients. Around two thirds of clients (67.2%) have one or more, with an average total credit card debt of £8,134.

There has also been a small rise in the number of clients falling behind on household bills from 39.6% in 2016 to 40.6% in the first half of 2017. This follows a large increase since 2010, when the proportion of clients in arrears stood at just 22.9%.

We are also seeing a growing number of clients in hire purchase (HP) arrears. In 2016, 17.9% of clients who had this type of expenditure were in HP arrears. In 2017 this figure is now at 20.6%. However, only a small proportion (3%) of all StepChange clients (not just those with this type of expenditure) are in HP arrears.

The data in this Statistics Mid-Yearbook is drawn from a StepChange Debt Charity warehouse containing the details of 23,874,197 million calls and 4 million clients. The figures are based on the 193,885 new clients debt advised from 1 January to 30 June 2017.



# Debt demographic

## Who's seeking advice?

- › Almost two thirds (63%) of all clients advised in the first six months of 2017 were under 40; a proportion which has continued to grow over the past five years: In 2013 only 53% were aged between 18 and 40
- › Four out of five of our clients (80.1%) are now renters; an increase from 66.7% in 2013
- › We are also seeing a growing gender gap among our clients: 59.2% of those advised in the first half of 2017 are female, compared with 55.4% in 2013
- › Around half of all clients advised in the first half of 2017 are in either full-time or part-time work. In 2013 this figure was at a similar level (48.3%)
- › Our latest data also highlights that 17.6% of our clients identify themselves as having a particular vulnerability beyond their financial difficulties. These vulnerabilities can include a visual or hearing impairment, mental health problems or a terminal illness.

Our latest statistics show that our clients are getting younger

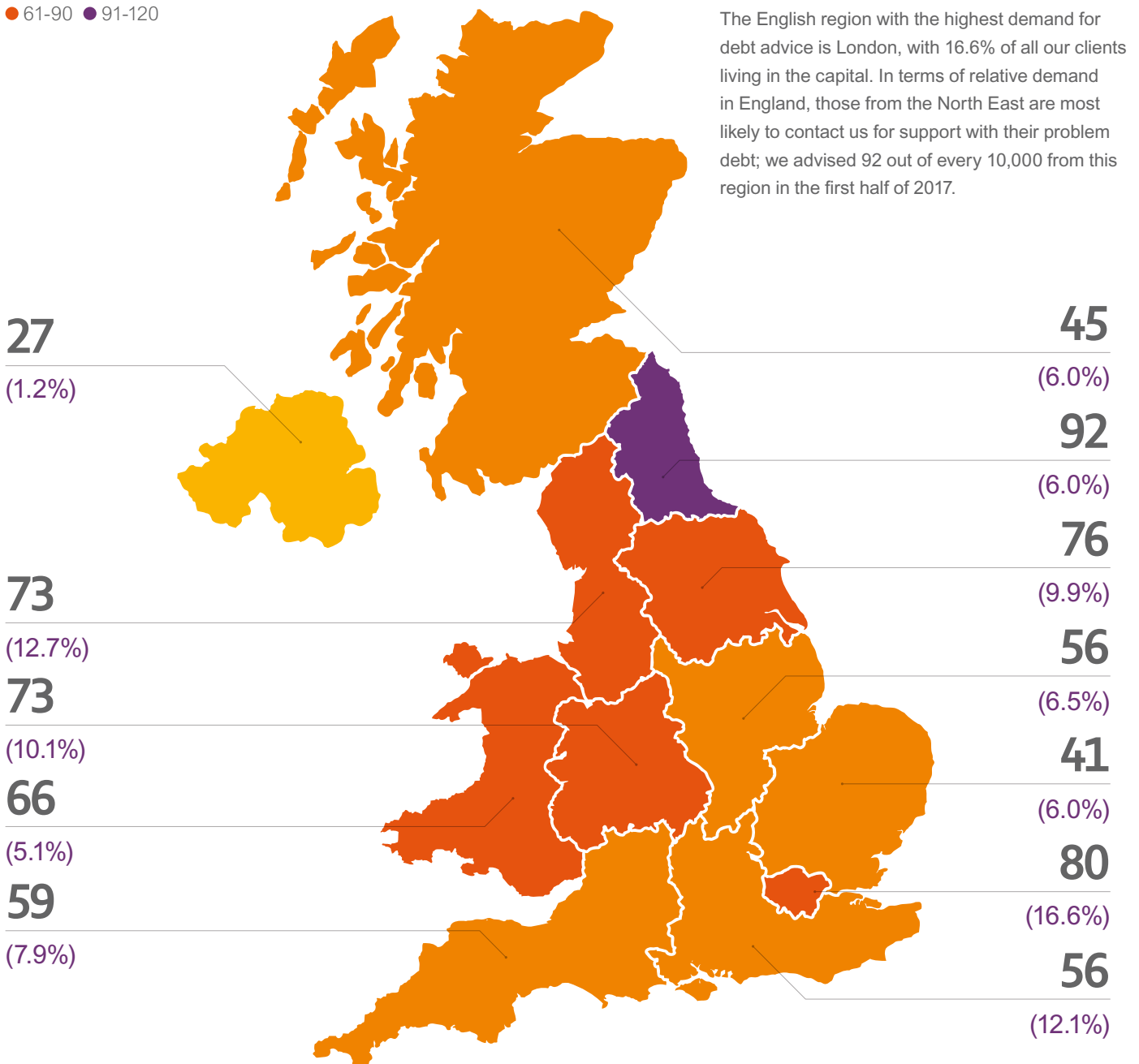
We are seeing fewer homeowners and an increased number of renters contacting us for advice and support with their problem debt



## Where our clients live – first half of 2017

### Clients per 10,000 population

- 01-30 ● 31-60
- 61-90 ● 91-120



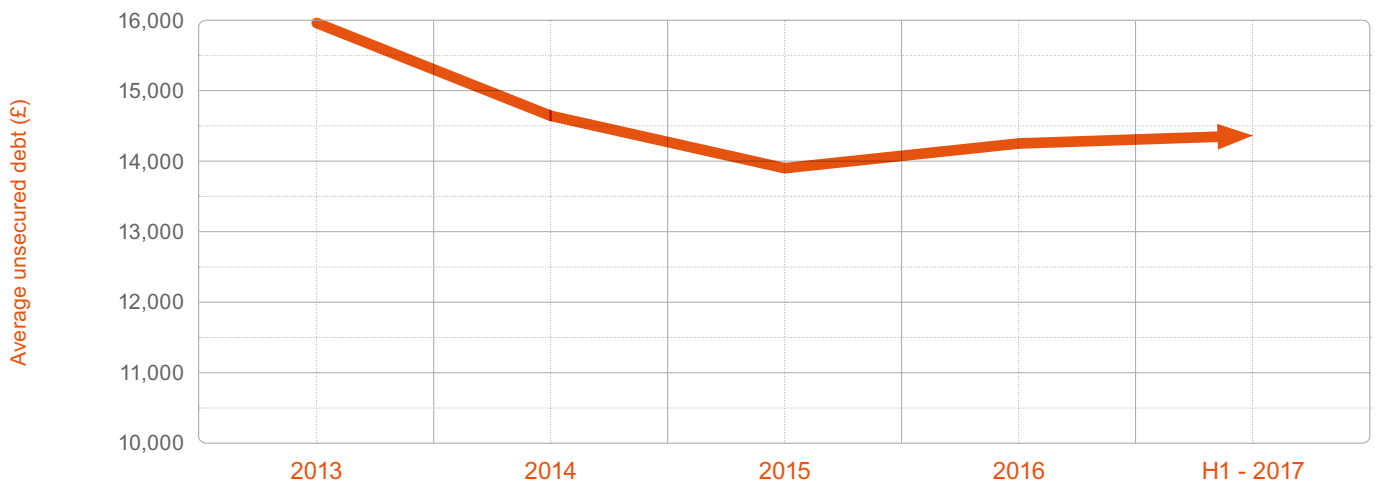
In relative terms, from January to June we advised 45 out of 10,000 people in Scotland, 27 out of 10,000 people in Northern Ireland, 66 out of 10,000 people in Wales, and 66 out of 10,000 people in England.

The English region with the highest demand for debt advice is London, with 16.6% of all our clients living in the capital. In terms of relative demand in England, those from the North East are most likely to contact us for support with their problem debt; we advised 92 out of every 10,000 from this region in the first half of 2017.

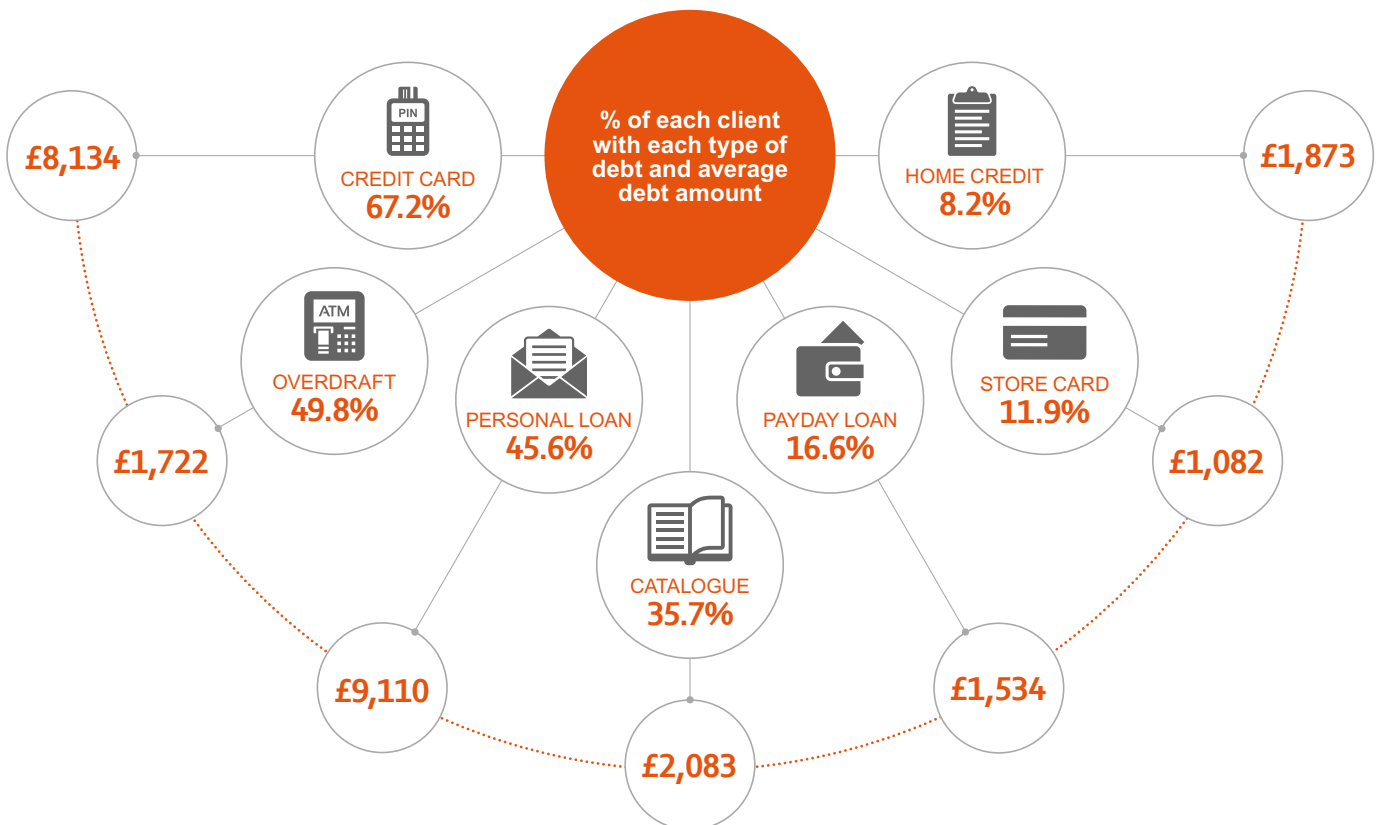
(Using ONS 2016 estimates)

# Unsecured debts – first half of 2017

## Unsecured debt over time



## Unsecured debts



## Clients advised with arrears over time

	2013	2014	2015	2016	H1 - 2017
Percentage of clients advised with arrears*	38.5%	39.8%	40.7%	39.6%	40.6%

\*This includes all clients in arrears in board payment, charging order, child maintenance, council tax, County Court judgment, electricity, gas, magistrates' fine, mortgage, mortgage endowment premium, other, fuel, rent, secured loan, service charge /ground rent, TV licence, water or hire purchase

## Arrears on essential household bills over time

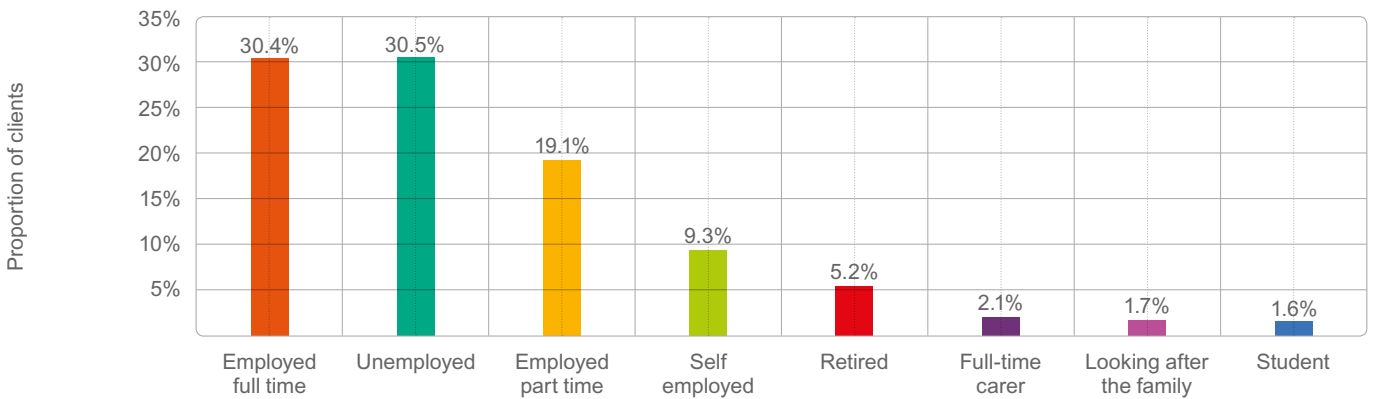
Average arrears amount
  Percentage of clients who have this type of expenditure who are in arrears

	Council tax	County Court judgment	Electricity	Gas	Magistrates' fine	Mortgage	Rent	TV licence	Water	Hire purchase
2013	£756	£2,914	£521	£484	£872	£2,911	£901	£69	£574	-
	25.1%	19.5%	13.3%	12.9%	25.2%	29.9%	23.6%	6.9%	19.9%	-
2014	£832	£2,715	£594	£541	£665	£2,947	£886	£76	£653	-
	28.3%	16.7%	14.2%	13.6%	21.4%	27.1%	25.0%	7.0%	22.4%	-
2015	£961	£2,772	£638	£539	£719	£2,966	£922	£78	£704	£828
	30.1%	19.7%	13.8%	12.7%	12.0%	24.1%	24.9%	7.6%	24.2%	16.2%
2016	£991	£2,489	£677	£553	£696	£3,389	£970	£78	£722	£897
	30.1%	20.2%	13.3%	11.6%	9.7%	22.9%	23.5%	7.7%	24.2%	17.9%
H1-2017	£1,012	£2,415	£668	£541	£625	£3,581	£1,008	£74	£797	£978
	31.0%	17.0%	14.5%	11.9%	5.4%	31.0%	22.2%	8.0%	24.4%	20.6%

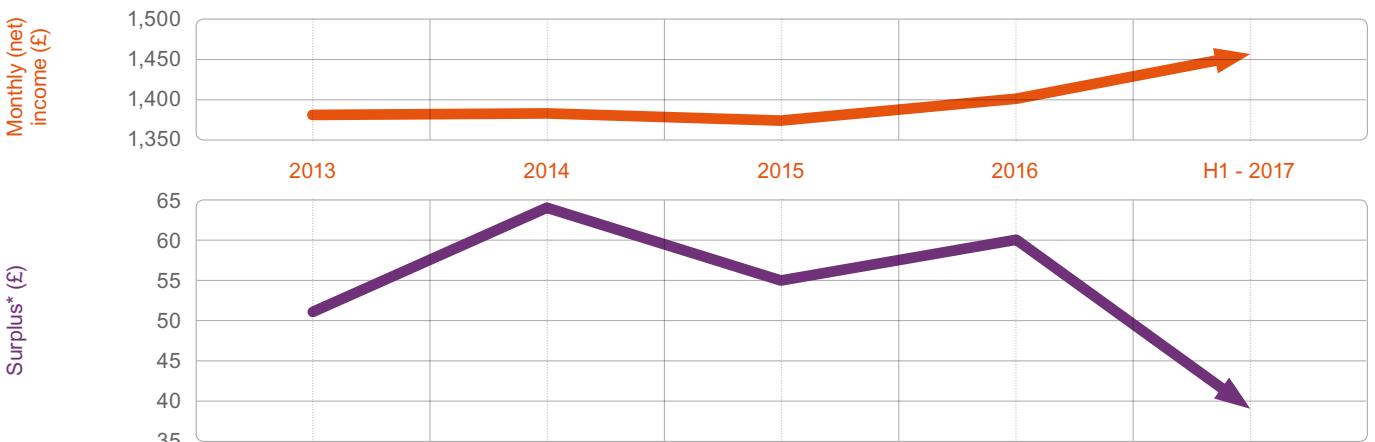


# A picture of those in debt – first half of 2017

## Employment status



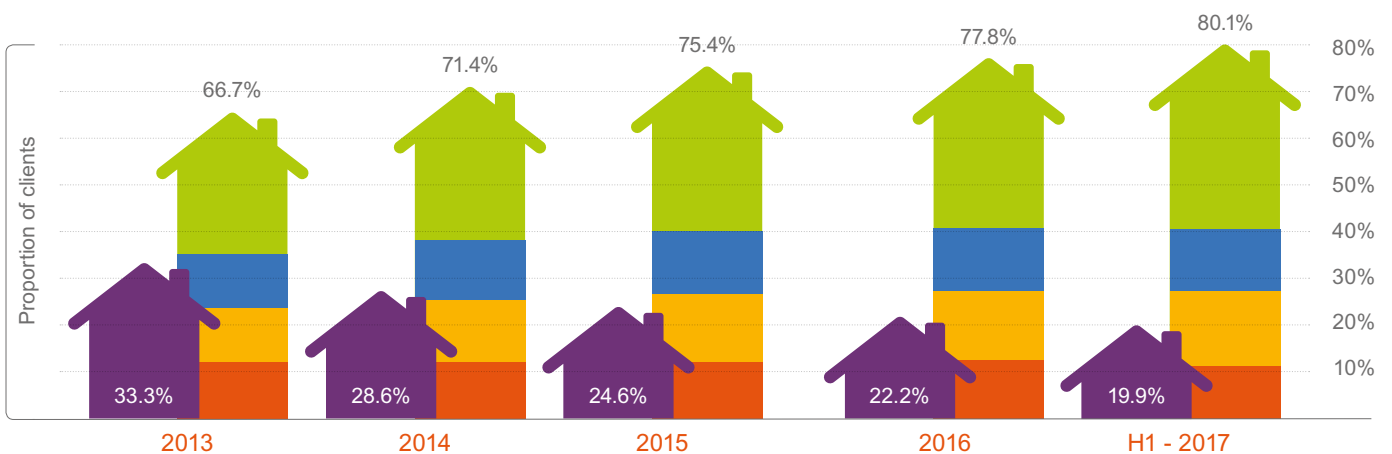
## Income and surplus



\*Surplus is the amount of balance left at the end of each month after clients have completed StepChange Debt Charity's debt advice and budgeting process

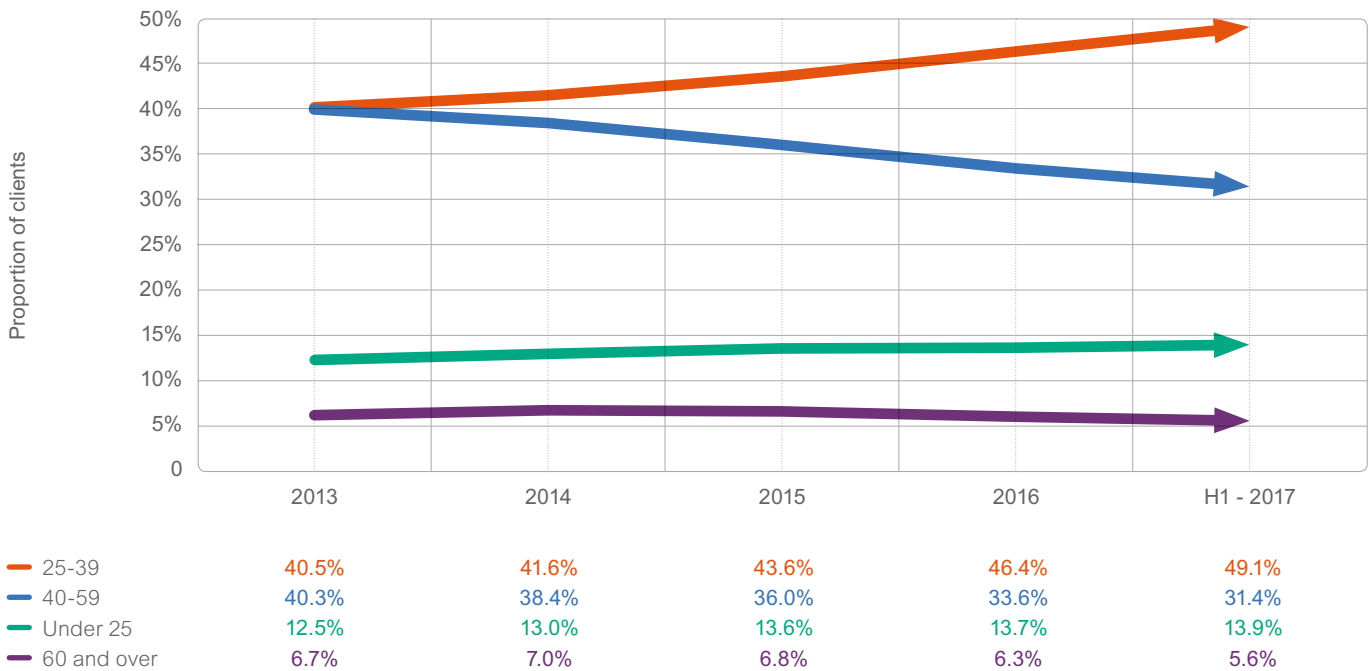
## Housing

● Homeowners Renters (including): ● Board payment ● Housing association ● Local authority ● Private landlord

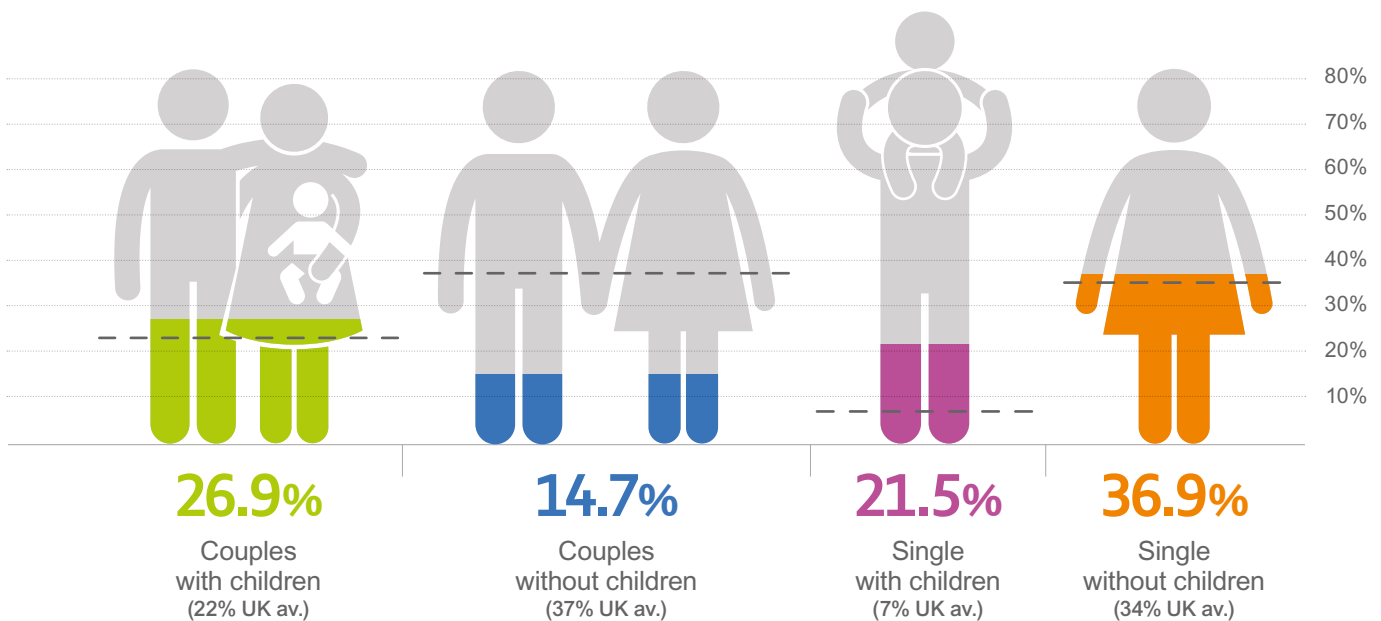




## Age



## Family composition



(Using ONS 2016 estimates)

**Editor: Josie Warner**

For data tables, including additional raw data, visit the [StepChange Debt Charity website](#).

For help and advice with problem debts call (Freephone) 0800 138 1111 Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm and Saturday 8am to 4pm, or use our online debt advice tool, [Debt Remedy](#).

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