45% of people have suffered from health issues caused by personal finance problems

New research[1] from the Fairbanking Foundation - the not-for-profit charity dedicated to encouraging banking institutions to improve the financial well-being of their customers – reveals that over the past five years, 45% of adults claim they have suffered from health conditions caused by having money problems.

Since 2009, one in three people (33%) say personal finance issues have caused them to suffer from stress, and 22% claim it has contributed to them having depression.   Nearly one in five (19%) say money worries have caused them to suffer from insomnia and 5% say it resulted in them being physically sick.

Alarmingly, money worries have also caused millions of people to either lose their jobs or fall out with partners and friends.   Some 6% of people say that since 2010 they have lost jobs as a result of having financial problems, while the same number claim they broke up with partners because of this.   Just under one in eight (12%) said money problems resulted in them developing eating disorders, and 7% said they started to drink too much. Some 1% says it resulted in them taking drugs.

This situation could become worse because findings from the debt charity StepChange suggest more people are getting into debt problems. Figures[2] published earlier this year revealed that in 2014 nearly 600,000 people contacted it for help, a rise of 56% since 2012. A survey of its clients revealed that thinking about their debt problems had resulted in 37.9% having chest pains and rapid heartbeat, and 29.5% complained it caused them to suffer from nervousness and shaking, and ringing in their ears.

Antony Elliott, Chief Executive of Fairbanking Foundation said: "The health of our finances and how we manage our money has a huge impact on our lives, and in some cases as our research shows, the effects of this can be devastating.

"The financial services industry is doing more to help customers who fall into financial difficulty, but our research suggests that people think it could do more. Of those people who encountered financial difficulties over the past five years, only 14% said that they thought their banks and creditors were supportive.

"We are working with a number of banks and credit organisations to help them improve the transparency of their products, and the tools they make available to customers to help them manage their money better. We are seeing a growing desire from the industry to engage with us, which is encouraging."

Free and impartial advice on money issues is available from a range of organisations including the Money Advice Service https://www.moneyadviceservice.org.uk/en and the Citizens Advice Bureau https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/

People with debt problems can access free online advice from debt charity Step Change at http://www.stepchange.org/ or by calling 0800 138 1111.

-Ends-

Notes to editors

[1]1,040 people were interviewed online by Consumer Intelligence between 16th and 19th July 2015.

(2) StepChange Statistics Yearbook 2014

About the Fairbanking Foundation Certification Scheme

The Foundation operates a certification scheme to encourage banking organisations to improve the financial well-being delivered by their products. The certification is called the 'Fairbanking Mark' and is granted in three, four or five star versions based on Fairbanking's assessment of the level of the financial well-being the product delivers. In addition to reviewing the financial well-being characteristics and features of the product, the process of assessment involves independent research carried out with a representative number of customers holding that product. This research is carried out to test the extent to which the theoretical benefits to financial well-being are delivered in practice.

Fairbanking's assessment also reviews the provider's complaints procedures and experience for the product in question.

Finally, The Fairbanking Mark Assessment Panel reviews the assessments that have been carried out and takes a look at wider factors, including the rates charged/offered by the product, before advising whether the Mark should be granted.

Fairbanking Marks are granted in 3, 4 or 5 star variants in five possible categories - credit card, savings account, current account with overdraft and current account without overdraft and personal loans.

For further information or interviews, please contact Phil Anderson/Kevan Reilly at Citigate Dewe Rogerson on 0207 282 1031/1096 or email phil.anderson@citigatedr.co.uk or Kevan.reilly@citigatedr.co.uk

About The Fairbanking Foundation

The Fairbanking Foundation is a not-for-profit, research-based charity (number 1125769) established in 2008 to encourage and assist providers of banking products to improve the financial well-being of their customers by enabling these customers to manage their money better. The Foundation does this through a combination of thorough consumer research to better understand what drives financial well-being, assessment of existing core banking products against this understanding, and the operation of the Fairbanking Mark certification scheme, now accredited by UKAS.

Further information and contact details for The Fairbanking Foundation can be found at www.fairbanking.org.uk.

How a Fairbanking Mark is granted

Banking organisations seeking to gain a Fairbanking Mark for one of their products must submit it for full analysis and testing by The Fairbanking Foundation. This includes research conducted with a representative number of customers by an independent research firm - usually Ipsos MORI, the Foundation's research partner. This research must confirm that a significant percentage of customers using the product found it useful in helping to improve their financial well-being, through factors like helping them to manage their money better and to achieve their savings goals.

Antony Elliott OBE

Antony received an OBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours announced on 14th June 2014, for "services to bank customers" as Founder and Chief Executive of The Fairbanking Fou