



## May 2012 Newsletter

In this month's issue:

[- Survey Suggest UK Companies Remain Optimistic](#)

[-HMRC Increasingly Using Debt Collectors](#)

[-Executive Pay Could be a Thing of the Past](#)

[- The Latest UK personal debt statistics](#)

[- Focus Insolvency Launches New Blog](#)

[- We're Almost There, 92% of Donation Target Achieved for Great Manchester Run](#)

[-Independent Business Review Service](#)



Find us on the  
Web



Follow us on  
Twitter



To ensure delivery of this email please add [a.platt@focusinsolvencygroup.co.uk](mailto:a.platt@focusinsolvencygroup.co.uk) to your address book or safe list. If you do not wish to receive any more newsletters or updates from Focus Insolvency Group please click the opt out link at the bottom of this email.

## Hello

## Welcome to Focus News

Although recent weeks have seen talk of a 'Double Dip' recession and the release of new statistics that evidence a rise in corporate insolvency, I am pleased to agree with and highlight the first article below. We have seen an increased degree of optimism and positivity with clients over the last few months and a definite increase in the number of clients taking early advice as they become more proactive in their approach to potential problems.

I'd also like to highlight our new Blog which has just been launched. We aim to publish articles each week, more information can be seen below. The first article is a short history from myself on how I started the practice. Hope you enjoy it and as always, we really appreciate your feedback.



~ Anthony Fisher  
MIPA, MABRP  
Licensed Insolvency Practitioner  
Managing Director

## Survey Suggest UK Companies Remain Optimistic

**Despite the current double-dip recession and a 10% rise in company insolvencies, two new surveys have suggested that UK companies still remain confident.**

Surveys by the Confederation of British Industry (CBI) and the UK Business Confidence Monitor found that the optimism of smaller manufacturers in the UK rose for the first time in almost a year and that overall confidence rose in the last three months suggesting there may show a return to growth in the April to June quarter.

"Firms expect orders and output to rise strongly in the coming quarter and plan to invest more in the year ahead, pointing to growing momentum in manufacturing activity," said Lucy Armstrong, chair of the CBI's SME council.



Visit us on  
LinkedIn



[Email Us](#)

The majority of those responding to the CBI survey reported a marginal rise in new orders and expected to see increased growth in the next three months.

The BCM confidence index is up from -9.3 to 12, its highest since the second quarter of 2011.

This promising news comes despite the fact that company insolvencies and administrations are up by 10% in the first quarter of this year, whereas personal insolvencies fell very slightly by 1%.

---

## HMRC Increasingly Using Debt Collectors



**Government departments are increasing the frequency with which they use debt collection agencies to recover outstanding tax and VAT and to tackle benefit cheats.**

These measures are partly to tackle increasing amounts of fraud as outlined in a recent report. The cost to public services for fraud and error runs to £31bn a year with HMRC reporting £6bn a year in tax error losses.

Debt collection agencies are chasing around £58bn of outstanding consumer debt as reported in 2011 by the CSA, the representative body for UK debt collectors, up 11% in the last two quarters.

"The economic environment has undoubtedly become more difficult so it is no surprise that debts are rising. But there are also other reasons, including 'new' creditors within the private sector and parts of national government who no longer see an issue with outsourcing debt for collection to professional and highly regulated agencies capable of recovering monies vital to the public purse.

The government has gone on record recently as reporting that overdue debts cost it between £7bn and £8bn – 95% of which resides with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and HMRC – and part of this has now been passed to our members for collection." - CSA president Sara de Tute.

HMRC are developing a number of new measures and screening processes as well as increasing the amount of prosecutions it brings to try and increase their savings even further.

---

## Executive Pay Could be a Thing of the Past

**The last two weeks have seen the announced departures of three top executive from three prominent companies signalling the possible end to large executive pay packets.**



Andrew Moss of Aviva, Sly Bailey of Trinity Mirror and David Brennan of AstraZeneca have all announced they are standing down.

The move by Andrew Moss came after Aviva suffered a high profile loss to its shareholders in a vote on executive pay at its annual general meeting last week. This was followed on Tuesday by almost half of the shareholders voting against pay awards at betting chain William Hill.

Andrew Moss will receive a pay-out of around £1.5m but had already turned down an annual pay increase to try and ease pressures. 54% of shareholders voted against the remuneration report outlining pay and bonus packages, only the fourth time a FTSE 100 company has lost such a vote. However 95% also voted in favour of re-electing Mr Moss as chief executive.

A number of other companies have seen many of their shareholders vote against pay and bonus levels, although these votes are currently not binding, the government are looking at changing the law to make boards more accountable to their investors.

---

## The Latest UK Personal Debt Statistics

- **£55,436** was the average household debt (including Mortgages) in March
- **£172m** was the daily amount of interest paid on personal debt in March
- **8,518** new debt problems were dealt with by the CAB each working day over the year to December
- **1,907 people** were made redundant every day between December and February
- **883,000 people** had been unemployed for over a year between December and February
- **£16.23m** of loans are written-off daily by UK Banks and Building Societies
- Every **15 min 28 seconds** a property is repossessed
- Every **4 min 35 seconds** someone will be declared insolvent or bankrupt
- **£1.501 billion** was the daily value of all plastic card purchases made in February

*Statistics from Credit Action*

---

## Focus Insolvency Launches New Blog



The first of the month saw us launch our brand new [blog](#), a platform for advice, questions, opinions and interviews all related to the insolvency and financial world.

You can view our [Welcome article](#) and also catch up with our first advice piece on company insolvency, ["Is My Company Insolvent?"](#).

Don't forget to visit the blog and sign up to get our new articles by email or RSS feed or if you have your own WordPress Blog, why not follow us, let us know where to find your blog and we'll follow you too.

We're also hoping to have some guest bloggers write some articles that will appear on the blog so if you're interested please contact us for details, we'll gladly return the favour.

---

## **We're Almost There, 92% of Donation Target Achieved for Great Manchester Run**

**Four Members of the Focus Team will be taking part in the Great Manchester Run on 20th May, we're almost at our charity fund raising target and it's never too late to donate!**



Andy Platt, Gary Birchall, Rebecca Chamberlain and Michelle Corcoran are donning their running shoes for the 10k [Great Manchester Run](#) in aid of [Derian House Children's Hospice](#).

We've raised almost £500, at 92% of our target we're doing great! Why not donate and help us reach 100%, there still time and it's easy with our [Just Giving Online Donation](#) page. All donations are going to a very worthy and deserving cause so dig deep!

---

## **Independent Business Review Service**

**Focus Insolvency Group is currently offering their much valued 'Business Review' service completely FREE and without obligation to companies within the North-West.**



Specifically designed for small to medium sized businesses, our Business Review Check will allow your clients to assess both the strengths and weaknesses of their company; identify areas of change or improvement and provide them with a clear plan of action on how to move forward.

Our Business Review starts with an initial impartial review meeting with one of our qualified advisors, which will cover:

- Business Performance & Strategy
- Cash flow Management
- Sales Activity
- Asset Utilisation
- Marketing & Competition Analysis
- Plans for the Future

Following the meeting, we will provide your client with a detailed report highlighting areas of action or improvement and outlining suitable advice

and suggestions for what is needed moving forward.

If you feel any of your clients could benefit from this service please do not hesitate to get in touch on **01257 251319**.

---

***If any of your clients have been affected by the stories  
in our newsletter or need advice on any other matters,  
please feel free to contact us.  
01257 251319***

---

Head Shot Images copyright [Eye of Rae Photography](#) ~ Other images from [free digital photos](#)