



**East Hampshire
Conservatives**

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NEWS RELEASE

3/10/08: immediate release

Damian puts debt centre stage at Tories' conference

At last week's Conservative conference in Birmingham, local parliamentary candidate Damian Hinds highlighted serious personal debt as one of the most pressing problems facing families in East Hampshire and nationwide.

As the opening speaker in the floor debate on Families, Damian said that money and debt were a major cause of relationship strain and family breakdown. "All too often," he said in the speech, "too much debt, or inappropriate debt, is taken on. Then if there is a change in personal circumstances, coupled with today's higher costs, the consequences can be dire."

Damian welcomed the party's plans for a free national debt advice service and financial education for all 11-18 year olds, and asked for more clarity on how the plans would be implemented. He praised organisations like the excellent Citizens' Advice Bureaux in Alton, Bordon and Petersfield, for their work with people worried about debt.

Damian has conducted extensive research and policy development work on debt-related issues, particularly focused on the so-called 'sub-prime' end of the market. At the conference, he also hosted or took part in a number of fringe events addressing policy questions with voluntary sector groups and industry representatives.

After his speech, Damian said, "Families in East Hampshire and nationally are feeling the strain from the credit crunch. While there is no overnight solution, Conservative proposals on a debt advice service and reforming the consumer credit market would be of practical help. I do hope the current government will seriously consider implementing them now."

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- The Conservative party conference took place in Birmingham between 28 September and 1 October
- Damian Hinds spoke in the debate on Families, on Tuesday 30 September, and took part in a number of fringe events on aspects of personal debt, organised by a variety of industry bodies, voluntary groups and regulators
- Conservative policy proposals already announced include:
 - Financial education for all 11-18s
 - Overhaul of rules on clarity and disclosure of costs
 - Free national debt advice service

Photographs:



Damian Hinds addresses the Conservative party conference in Birmingham



Damian with Justine Greening MP (shadow Treasury minister) at a meeting with charities on young people in chronic debt