



PRESS RELEASE

**Bristol-born comedian, Stephen Merchant, presents new 'Red Nose Plaque' to local charity in recognition of Comic Relief funding**

Talking Money, based in Bristol, has become one of more than 2,100 organisations across the UK to receive a brand new 'Red Nose Plaque' in recognition of its vital work, supported by Comic Relief funding. The charity, which provides free and independent debt and energy advice to local people, is very proud to announce that the Comic Relief plaque will be presented by Bristol-born comedian Stephen Merchant on Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March in time for Comic Relief's Red Nose Day.

Stephen Merchant says that 'I am delighted to present this Red Nose plaque to Talking Money as recognition for their involvement with a local, Comic Relief funded project. This project is a fine example of the valuable work local charities undertake with Comic Relief funding.'

The Secure and Warm Advice Partnership (SWAP), led by Talking Money, consists of seven advice agencies in the West of England: Age UK Bristol, Avon and Bristol Law Centre, North Bristol Advice Centre, South Bristol Advice Service, St Pauls Advice Centre and West of England Care and Repair. The Partnership is designed to help older people combat all types of financial hardship.

The project is funded by Comic Relief and is designed to deliver advice and support to 3,500 people aged 65 and over. It helps older people increase their income, improve their financial skills and reduce fuel poverty by delivering a range of advice, support and information services. These specialist services include money, debt, energy and housing advice.

SWAP is one of 16,800 UK projects who have received funding from Comic Relief since the charity began in 1988. Secure and Warm has received over £90,000 this year to help over 1000 local people.

Round and red to echo Comic Relief's iconic Red Nose, the plaque features a quote from one of Comic Relief's supporters, Davina McCall, and it will be placed proudly in the reception of Talking Money in West Street, St Philips, Bristol.

Stephen Merchant will also be judging a selection of the finest cakes and treats baked by Talking Money's staff and volunteers as part of their Bake Off for Red Nose Day.

Helena Thompson, Talking Money's Chief Executive Officer, says: "We are very grateful to Comic Relief for the funding they have provided to us over the last two and a half years. This funding has allowed Talking Money and our Secure and Warm partner agencies to provide money advice, support and information to many local people who really need it."

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**Notes to editors:**

Talking Money, formerly known as Bristol Debt Advice Centre, has been offering free independent advice for over 25 years. Services include specialist debt advice, energy advice, benefits advice, support with managing money and a self-help area.

Talking Money is the lead agency for the Secure and Warm Advice Partnership, which consists of Age UK Bristol, Avon and Bristol Law Centre, North Bristol Advice Centre, South Bristol Advice Services, St Pauls Advice Centre and West of England Care and Repair.

Talking Money is a registered charity funded by grants and voluntary contributions. To find out more about our work, please visit [www.talkingmoney.org.uk](http://www.talkingmoney.org.uk) or contact us on 0117 954 3990 or [mail@talkingmoney.org.uk](mailto:mail@talkingmoney.org.uk)