

Useful Contacts

Independent Advice

Free independent and confidential advice on how to deal with debt, including payment offer plans.

National Debt Line

www.nationaldebtlines.co.uk
0800 808 4000

Consumer Credit Counselling Service (CCCS)

www.cccs.co.uk
0800 138 1111

Citizens Advice Bureau

Free practical information via the phone or face to face with a trained counsellor on a range of topics including, housing, benefits, debt and legal issues.
www.nacab.org.uk (England & Wales)
www.cas.org.uk (Scotland)
www.citizensadvice.org.uk (NI)

Pay Plan

Free debt advice and solutions.
www.payplan.com
0800 085 4298

Money Basics

Simple, clear, independent information about money.
www.moneybasics.co.uk

Credit Action

Free debit advice and self help guides.
www.creditaction.org.uk

Benefits and Tax

Job Centre

Information and advice on jobs, training and benefits.
www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk

Money, Tax & Benefits

Government information on public services.
www.direct.gov.uk

Turn 2 Us

Independent charity offering information and help on accessing benefits, grants and welfare.
www.turn2us.org.uk

Entitled To

Free web based calculator that can help you work out your entitlement to benefits or tax credit.
www.entitledto.co.uk

Child Support Agency

www.csa.gov.uk
0845 713 3133

Financial Information

Financial Services Authority

Information and advice on mortgages, including a leaflet on what to do if you can't meet your mortgage payments.
www.moneymadeclar.fsa.gov.uk
0845 606 1234

Financial Ombudsman Service

Official independent expert in settling complaints between consumers and businesses providing financial services.
www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk
0845 080 1800

Other Useful Sites

Utilities switching

www.switchwithwhich.co.uk
www.uswitch.com
www.energyhelpline.com
www.utilitywarehouse.co.uk

Generate more income

www.spareroom.co.uk
www.ebay.co.uk

Price comparisons

www.confused.com
www.moneysupermarket.com
www.kelkoo.co.uk

creditaction endorsed
Better thinking about money

"As the national money education charity, we at Credit Action support initiatives that encourage customers to maintain contact with their lender and strongly recommend customers seek help as soon as possible if they are struggling with their repayments."

For more information contact us at
www.creditaction.org.uk

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GE Money
Home Lending

Take Control of Your Money

Often through no fault of their own many people find that they can't afford to pay all their debts and fall into arrears. By keeping a detailed picture of all your spending you will be able to see any potential problems and possibly identify ways you can make savings or maximise your income.

This leaflet offers suggestions on how to help take control of your money.



GE Money
Home Lending

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Maximise Income

Think about ways to increase the money coming into your household budget, which could make paying your bills and debts easier. There are many possibilities, but what may be best for you will depend on your circumstances. Here are a few suggestions:

Payment Protection Insurance

Check all your mortgage, loan, and credit/store card agreements to see if you have payment insurance – ask the lenders if you are unsure. Look at the policy conditions to see if you can make a claim, for instance if you are not working due to redundancy, accident, or illness. Remember to keep copies of claims and correspondence.

Benefits

If you qualify for a benefit you should claim it – it's yours. There may be a range of benefits available, depending on your circumstances. Please refer to the useful contact section (overleaf) for more details.

Other Possibilities

• Overtime

Make sure your employer knows you are interested in extra work when it is available. If you don't ask it might be offered to someone else.

• Lodger

Do you have a spare room that could be rented out to a lodger? You could earn £4,250 a year tax free (get permission from your mortgage lender first).

• Income Tax

Do you qualify for a lower tax code or a tax rebate?

• Child Maintenance

Ensure you get paid maintenance if you are entitled to it.

• Additional part time work

You may like to consider early morning, late evening, weekend work or working from home.

• Sell assets

You may have valuable assets or unwanted items that are not absolutely necessary - a second car, boat, motorbike or items you've bought and never used. But, don't sell anything that you will have to replace later because you can't do without it.

Reduce Spending

If you keep a note of everything you spend it will help to identify spending that can be reduced or cut out completely. You might have already cut down on your spending and think that there is no room to economise any further, but please keep an open mind to other possibilities, for instance:

Get the best value for money

- Switch to a cheaper supplier of utilities (gas, electricity and telephone) and choose the cheapest payment method.
- Consider switching your credit card balance to a company that offers a lower interest rate for balance transfers, but don't use the card for new items. We always suggest taking independent advice when rearranging your finances.
- Check price comparison websites. There are now a range of websites which enable you to compare the cost of everything from holidays, electrical goods, financial products to your weekly grocery shopping.
- Discount vouchers are now available on the internet for many high street stores and restaurants. Make full use of these offers before paying full price.
- Use free public services. Some lending libraries also have a wide range of magazines and newspapers, music and video, and use of PC's and the Internet.
- Always shop around for essential items and make use of genuine sales and money off coupon offers.
- Consider buying less expensive 'own brand' products from supermarkets for regular items.

Healthier lifestyle

- Walk or cycle to work or school instead of driving or using public transport.
- Make a list for regular shopping and stick to it - don't buy on impulse.
- Stop smoking - it might take a lot of willpower, but you can get free help and support.

Do it yourself

- Repair rather than replace if possible.
- DIY - not just decorating, but anything you can (safely) do yourself - for instance, clean your own windows rather than paying a window cleaner.

Saving money will mean changing your spending habits, but try not to think of it as an unwelcome economy drive. Be positive. Most of the suggestions are about having a healthier lifestyle, or getting the best value for money – it's not just about spending less.