



Money Worries



Reader Group approved

If you would like this leaflet in any other format please contact the Customer Service Team on **01484 435715**

A guide to getting your finances back on track

Sometime during our lives most of us will overspend and get into debt. We can get our finances back on track by cutting down and spending less, but at times the situation is a little more serious.

This leaflet provides advice on what to do if you find yourself in financial difficulties and information about where to go for help.

Debts can arise when you are spending more money than you have coming in.

You might borrow money or stop paying bills because of:

- Unemployment
- High pressure doorstep tactics (illegal money lenders)
- Sickness
- Bereavement
- Relationship breakdown
- Easily available credit

Lots of people are in the same or similar situations so don't be embarrassed to ask for help.

Facing Up to Your Debts

It is often tempting to put off dealing with your debts. Don't ignore the problem it won't go away and the longer you leave it the worse it will get - facing up to the problem will put you in control of the situation.

Work out what you owe – get your paperwork together. This might seem difficult if debts are being passed to different collection agencies and you have lost track of exactly how much you owe but account and reference numbers will be quoted on all correspondence which should help you. Be sure to include everything you owe. A Debt Advisor will be able to help if you still can't find everything – if you need help contact your Neighbourhood Officer or one of the agencies listed on page 7 of this leaflet .

Borrowing

Don't be tempted to borrow further money without getting advice. As well as getting into more debt, additional loans are likely to incur higher interest rates.

How much money do you have coming in?

The next stage is to see how much money you have coming in each week or month. It is important to include all income which may include:-wages (take an average over 5 weeks or 3 months if they vary), Child Benefit, Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, Working Tax Credits, Pensions, maintenance and any other benefits. Remember to include all your and your partner's (if applicable) income.

Benefit Entitlement

You may be entitled to increase your income by claiming additional benefits and Tax Credits. You can seek further help from the agencies listed on page 7 of this leaflet.

Working out your Outgoings

The next stage is to work out how much money you are spending. This means filling in an expenditure sheet – see the Financial Services Authority leaflet – '**Just the facts about making your budget work for you**'. Do not include items such as credit card payments or catalogues as these are 'non-priority' debts but include things such as rent, Council Tax, fuel, water, food and housekeeping, TV licence, travelling expenses, school meals, clothing and other items. Try to be realistic about what you spend.

You should now have a list of all your debts, a list of your weekly or monthly income and your expenditure,



Prioritising Debts

You now need to split your debts into two categories according to how important they are. These are called priority and non-priority debts.

Debts such as your rent, utilities eg. gas, electricity and water, and Council Tax are known as priority debts and these should be paid over and above other debts. These are debts that could result in for example you losing your home, having your gas cut off or going to prison. Don't worry – you can't go to prison for most types of debt.

Non-priority debts include credit cards, doorstep lending, bank loans and overdrafts, loans from friends and family and catalogue debts. This is because the creditor can't do things like take your home away. They will however continue to send you letters and send debt collectors so don't be tempted to ignore the problem.

Here is a list of priority debts and the consequences of non-payment:-

Type of Debt	Consequence
Rent	Loss of Home
Council Tax	Attachment of earnings/bailiffs/prison
Gas/electricity	Pre-payment meter/disconnection
TV Licence	Fine/Prison
Telephone	Disconnection
Hire Purchase	Loss of Goods
Child Support	Attachment of Earnings/bailiffs/prison
County Court Judgements	Attachments of earnings/bailiffs
Income Tax, National Insurance, VAT	Bailiffs/prison/bailiffs
Hire purchase	Repossession of goods

Negotiate Payment Terms

Now you have worked out your income and expenditure hopefully your income will be higher than your outgoings. This means that you will have some money to offer on priority debts. Deal with priority debts first. If you can afford to make payments don't forget arrears payments are on top of normal payments you make. Explain to creditors (people you owe money to) that you are having financial problems and want to pay the arrears in regular instalments.

If your expenditure is higher than your income check your figures again and then contact one of the agencies listed in this leaflet for help.

Speak to creditors and ask them to stop any further action whilst you get help. If the first person you speak to is unhelpful ask to speak to someone more senior. You can also write or e-mail your creditors to explain your situation quoting your reference numbers. Do not agree to enter any unrealistic arrangements. If you cannot meet their request tell them you will seek further advice.

It is important to keep a record of all dates of telephone conversations and any letters. If you need any further help contact one of the agencies listed on page 7 of this leaflet.

If you seek help your advisor will look at how to begin repaying priority debts such as your rent and Council Tax and explain the consequences of not paying these. Once priority debts are addressed the advisor will look at how your non-priority debts such as credit cards can be dealt with.

You may see adverts from companies offering to manage your debts for you. These companies often charge a fee. The agencies listed on page 7 of this leaflet give FREE, confidential advice.

Dealing with an Emergency

There are some situations which need immediate action and specialist advice. This section explains what you should do in these circumstances.

Repossession of Your Home

You can avoid getting to this stage by speaking to your Neighbourhood Officer on **01484 435715** as soon as you get into difficulties paying your rent and coming to a reasonable agreement to repay the rent you owe. Your Neighbourhood Officer will give you help and advice or refer you for more specialist help.

**Please be aware your home is at risk
if you fail to pay your rent.**

Bailiffs and Preventing Seizure

Do not let bailiffs into your home unless they have a possession order. Seek advice urgently from a debt advisor. See page 7 for details of agencies who will be able to help you.

Imprisonment

If you refuse to pay your Council Tax bill, the Council might apply to the Magistrates Court for a Possession Order. If this happens you should seek legal representation

Disconnection of Utilities

In order to disconnect your gas or electricity supply your supplier must obtain a court order. Get advice immediately from one of the agencies listed

List of Agencies who will be able to assist you:

CHAS, Kirklees

Tel: **01484 223922/01924 324990**

The Springs Advice Centre, Wakefield

Tel: **01924 302805**

Money Advice Service, Rotherham

Tel: **01709 822329**

Citizens Advice Bureau

www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Tel: **0844 848 7970** Kirklees

0844 499 4138 Wakefield

0844 826 9680 Rotherham



Consumer Credit Counselling Service

www.cccs.co.uk

Tel: **0800 1381111**

National Debtline

www.nationaldebtline.co.uk

Tel: 0808 808 4000



Community Legal Advice

www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk

Tel: **0845 345 4345**

Credit Unions

Castle & Minster Credit Union Ltd, Kirklees

Tel: **01484 226666**

White Rose Credit Union, Wakefield

Tel: **01924 305168** or **01977 723777**

Rothersave, Rotherham

Tel: **01709 514263**

**If you have any difficulties in paying your rent
please don't delay, speak to us today.**

You can make a complaint, comment or compliment about the services provided by Sadeh Lok by speaking to a member of staff either face to face or over the telephone, by sending a letter, e-mail or fax or by completing a customer feedback form.

Sadeh Lok Housing
Trafford House
11 Halifax Road
Huddersfield, HD3 3AN
Tel: 01484 435715
Fax: 01484 432645
E-Mail: customerservices@sadehlok.co.uk
www.sadehlok.co.uk

Office Opening Hours:
Monday to Friday 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m.

Sadeh Lok offices at Trafford House may not be accessible to you if you have mobility difficulties.

If you do have mobility difficulties and you would like to speak to a member of our staff in person, please contact Sadeh Lok's Customer Service Team on **01484 435715** who will be happy to arrange either a home visit or an appointment to meet you at another suitable location

If you would like this information explaining in your language or in large print, Braille, or audio formats, please contact our office on 0845 057 7082 where a member of staff can help.

(English)

ئەگەر تۆزۈتۈش كۆرۈنەنەن رۇن بىر كىتەپكە ۋە بە زىمانى خوت يا بە پىتى چاپكراۋى گە ۋرە، بە نوسىنى برايل (بو كويره كان) يان بە تومارى دەنگ لە سە ر كاسىت، بە يارمە تىت پە يۈە ندى بىكە بە فە رمانگە كە ي تىمە ۋە بە ھوى ئە م ژمارە تە لە فونە ۋە 08450577082 ئە و كاتە يە كىك لە ئە ندامانى كارگىرى ئە تۈانىت يارمە تىت بدات.

(Kurdish)

اگر آپ کو ان معلومات کی وضاحت اپنی زبان میں درکار ہو یا آپ اسے بڑی لکھائی یا بریل میں یا آڈیو ٹیپ پر چاہتے ہوں تو براہ مہربانی ہمارے دفتر سے ٹیلی فون نمبر: 0845 057 7082 پر رابطہ کریں۔ وہاں پر موجود ہمارے عملے کا کوئی ممبر آپ کی مدد کر سکے گا۔

(Urdu)

Ako zelite ove informacije objasnjene (prevedene) na vasem jeziku ili stampano Velikim slovima, brailleovim pismom (za slijepe osobe), ili audio (kasetama) formatu, molimo vas da nazovete nas ured na br. 0845 057 7082 gdje nasi clanovi su na usluzi.

(Bosnian)

આ માહિતી તમને તમારી ભાષામાં સમજાવવામાં આવે અથવા મોટી છપાઈમાં, બ્રેઇલમાં અથવા ઓડિયો સ્વરૂપોમાં મળી રહે એવું જો તમે ઇચ્છતા હોય તો, મહેરબાની કરી અમારી ઓફિસનો 0845 057 7082 નંબર પર સંપર્ક કરો જ્યાં અમારા સ્ટાફનો કોઈ સભ્ય તમને મદદ કરી શકે છે.

(Gujarati)

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਬ੍ਰੇਲ, ਜਾਂ ਆਡੀਓ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਦਫਤਰ ਨਾਲ 0845 057 7082 'ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਸਟਾਫ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਮਦਦ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ।

(Punjabi)