



The Post Office is committed to helping our customers through the bad times as well as the good. This leaflet has been designed to provide practical guidance and support in response to the needs of those who feel they may be in financial difficulty or perhaps may encounter financial difficulties at some point in the future.

Struggling to manage your finances?

Anyone can get into difficulty managing their debt. We understand that there are many circumstances that could affect your ability to manage your financial commitments - losing a job, a reduction in income because you have a baby, leaving a job to provide full time care etc.

If you're struggling to keep up with your financial commitments, or think you may have difficulties in the future, it's important not to ignore the situation or pretend it's not happening. There are solutions and help available. Taking control of your finances and getting back on track could be easier than you think.

Some steps to take if you find yourself in financial difficulty:

Work out a budget

Work out a personal budget. A simple breakdown of your money coming in and how you spend it will help you understand how much you can realistically afford and the most important areas you should focus on. For example, ensure you put your priority debts, such as your mortgage or rent, first.

You may be entitled to some government benefits to help increase your income. Contact your local benefits office or visit www.turn2us.org.uk for more information.

If you have an income protection insurance policy, check to see if you can make a claim. You may also be able to claim on other protection policies, for example mortgage repayment protection insurance could be applicable in the case of redundancy.

Talk to your creditors as soon as possible

- Whether you are in arrears or are up to date with your payments but finding that existing commitments are causing you difficulties, the sooner you talk to your creditors, the better.
- You can usually make contact via phone, email or web, with contact details being available on websites.
- It is only through making contact, that the creditor can help and mutually suitable arrangements can be reached.

Need help? Please call

0800 169 2000

8am-7pm, Mon-Sat

9am-5pm, Sun

Closed bank holidays

0800: All calls to 0800 numbers are free of charge whether made from a landline or mobile phone. Calls may be monitored or recorded for training and compliance purposes.

Seek free independent advice

There are lots of organisations that can provide confidential, impartial and free help and advice. See below for details of a selection of organisations.*

Free Help & Advice

MoneyHelper

For free, unbiased and easy-to-access money tools, information and advice, visit www.moneyhelper.org.uk or phone **0800 138 7777**

Money Advice Scotland

If you live in Scotland, phone **0141 572 0237** or visit www.moneyadvicescotland.org.uk to find contact details for debt advice in your local area

Advice NI – Debt Action NI service

If you live in Northern Ireland, phone **0800 917 4607**, email debt@adviceni.net or visit www.debtaction-ni.net for debt advice

AdviceUK

Member centres offer debt advice including specialist advice for minority communities and people with disabilities – www.adviceuk.org.uk or phone **0300 777 0107**

Christians Against Poverty (CAP)

For free debt advice in your home, check post code coverage at www.capuk.org then call **0800 328 0006**

Citizens Advice

For advice and information on debt and other topics, visit your local Citizens Advice Bureau (address in the phone book) or go to www.adviceguide.org.uk

National Debtline

If you live in England, Wales or Scotland phone **0808 808 4000** or visit www.nationaldebtline.co.uk for debt advice and information

StepChange Debt Charity

For debt advice throughout the UK phone **0800 138 1111** or visit www.stepchange.org

Other Useful Organisations

Civil Legal Advice

You may get legal aid if your home is at risk. Check at www.gov.uk/legal-aid or phone **0345 345 4345**

Financial Ombudsman Service

If you have a complaint that you can't resolve with your lender, the Financial Ombudsman Service may be able to help – phone **0300 123 9123** or **0800 023 4567** or visit www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk

*Other free, impartial advice organisations are available. Organisations may vary between UK regional areas.

Doing nothing could make things worse

Never ignore missed repayments, they won't go away. Your lender could take legal action against you, and you could end up paying more in interest and charges. Missed payments could affect your credit rating and make it more difficult to get credit in future.

If you have a Post Office loan or any other Post Office debt, don't ignore correspondence or calls from our staff. We are here to help and talking to us is the first step to helping you get the situation under control.
