



Let's talk  
about money

## *Your Money Guide*

### **For offenders who want to learn how to manage their money**

Dealing with money is one of the most difficult things we have to do in life. If we don't manage the money we have, we can find ourselves running into all sorts of problems. The aim of this leaflet is to help you get to grips with some of the basics of managing your money while you are in prison, preparing for release and on supervision in the community. It is also to encourage you to speak to your offender manager or personal officer about any financial problems. They will provide you with more detailed information and refer you to organisations who can help you further.

## How to look after your money

Most of us have heard stories about people stashing their money under their mattress but there are better and safer places to keep your money.

The best place to keep your everyday money is in a bank, building society or credit union, and on release you can contact any of these organisations to open an account. While you are still in prison you should speak to your offender manager or personal officer about how to open a basic bank account or credit union account whilst serving your sentence. Access to this account will be limited (via postal services) and you will not have access to a loan while you are serving your sentence.

## Why is it a good idea to open a basic bank account?

Putting your money into an account will keep it safe and you can have your benefits or wages paid straight into the account. With a basic bank account you get:

- A cash card to withdraw money (you can only take out the money you have in your account).



- A debit card with either the Solo or Electron logo on it (you can use this to spend money in shops, over the phone or on the Internet but you can only spend what you have in your account).
- The opportunity to set up direct debits and standing order payments, which let you pay for things like bills straight from your account on a regular basis.
- Regular statements, which are a record of what you have spent and saved so you can keep track of where your money is going.
- Opening a basic bank account will also provide you with a useful form of personal identity, which may be helpful to you on release.

### **How do I open a bank account?**

The bank will help you to complete an application form and you will have to provide (by law) proof of your identity. Banks, building societies and credit unions accept the following documents as proof of your identity:

- Passport
- Driving licence
- Utility bill
- Benefit documentation.
- A letter or Personal Identification Document, signed by your prison governor, hostel manager or social worker.



## **What is a Credit Union?**

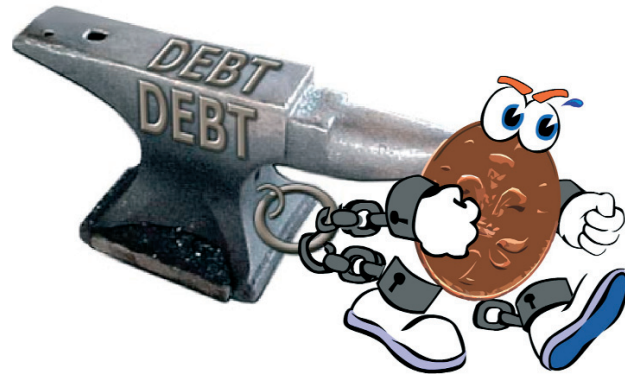
Credit unions are great for people on low incomes and people with a poor credit history. They are financial organisations run in the community by the community and they offer a place to save your money regularly even in small amounts.

## **How can I manage my account while I am in prison?**

You can appoint a relative or friend to manage your account while you are away. To do this you will have to sign a Letter of Authority, which confirms the name of the person you appoint to manage your account and make sure things like new plastic cards and statements don't get lost. Your supervising manager will be able to give you advice on putting together a Letter of Authority.

## **What should I do if I have debts?**

If you spend more money than you have, you end up getting into debt. Debts tend to grow and there can be serious consequences for not paying them back. It is important to get in contact with the people you owe money to quickly, or seek help with this, and try to reach an agreement about how you will pay off the debt.



Ask your offender manager or personal officer to refer you to an organisation within the prison that can provide advice on dealing with debt.

## What is the difference between cash, debit, credit and store cards?

Plastic cards are now the most popular way to pay for things and to withdraw cash from your account. Each card comes with a Personal Identification Number (PIN), which you have to use when you pay for goods and services, and when you withdraw money from a cash machine.



- **A cash card** allows you to take money out of a cash machine only.
- **A debit card** can be used to take money directly from your bank or building society to pay for goods, for example in a shop or on-line, or to withdraw money from a cash machine.
- There are also **credit** and **store** cards which incur interest on a monthly basis. It is best to avoid using these cards if you have had problems managing your money in the past.



## What grants and benefits can I claim?

The payment of any grant or benefit will depend on the terms of your sentence and release conditions. Your offender manager or personal officer can tell you about organisations that can provide you with 'one to one' advice on benefits and how to make a claim. You may be able to claim one or more of benefits at any one time.


## Insurance

As an ex offender when applying for insurance you need to disclose your unspent conviction/s even if not asked as it is an offence not to. Although this may make you feel as if you are still being punished for your offence it is very important to do this. If you do not disclose unspent convictions and you need to make an insurance claim you may find that the insurance company doesn't pay up. Don't be tempted to put the insurance in someone else's name, as this too will make your insurance invalid.

## How can I improve my money management skills?

To find out how to take part in learning opportunities, which could include money management courses, speak to your offender supervisor, personal officer or resettlement team. Improving your reading, writing and number skills can also help you manage your money. You can use these skills to help you keep track of your spending and to work out whether you are getting a good deal on special offers, loans and savings.

For those who have access to the internet there is an easy to follow on-line 'Let's Talk About Money -Your Money Guide' which deals with the items covered in this leaflet and much more - please visit <http://www.letstalkaboutmoney.org.uk/>



Date		Money I Spend	Money I Get
Oct 1	Rent	400.00	
Oct 1	Train ticket	85.40	
Oct 2	Supermarket	16.82	
Oct 3	Phone Bill	31.69	
Oct 5	Hairdresser	10.00	
Oct 7	Clothes	45.32	
Oct 9	Supermarket	25.50	
Oct 10	Gas Bill	30.00	
Oct 11	Cinema	15.50	
Oct 13	Supermarket	11.50	
Oct 14	Eat out	10.50	
Oct 15			Monthly Salary 1500.78
Sum		682.23	1500.78