

Managing your money

Issue 01

Advice and support for people living in temporary accommodation

In this issue we will explore

How to create an effective budget plan



How to cut costs and save money



Financial support for rent, food, utilities, furniture and childcare



Crisis loans to help you in an emergency



IFAN's 'Worrying about money' tool

A tool designed to help you figure out which organisations in Crawley can help if you are struggling to make ends meet.

worryingaboutmoney.co.uk/crawley

Welcome to this first newsletter from Crawley Borough Council in partnership with the Crawley Local Community Network (LCN), including the NHS and Primary Care Services. Voluntary sector collaborators such as Citizens Advice West Sussex, Age UK, Crawley Community Action and Carers Support West Sussex, have also shared their guidance.

Together, we aim to provide valuable resources that will support your health and wellbeing while you are living in temporary accommodation. We are working hard to develop a comprehensive 'Guide to Temporary Accommodation'. In the meantime, we will touch on some key talking points through a number of themed newsletters, where you will also find information on local support in the Crawley area. If there is anything that you would like to see in our next newsletter, please contact Jacqueline.thatcher@crawley.gov.uk with your ideas and suggestions.



We understand that moving into temporary accommodation can be a stressful time. That is why we try and make the transition as easy as possible. One of the many aspects of this adjustment period will be learning how to **manage your money more effectively** and **gain control of your financial situation**.

The Crawley LCN is here to help you every step of the way. In this newsletter, we offer **tips, advice and resources** that can support you in your journey towards financial security.



Budgeting and debt advice

The first step

Start by assessing your current financial situation. How much money is **coming in**? How much is **going out**? What do you **need** to spend money on? Are there areas where you could be spending **less**?

Budget planning — taking control of your money

Creating a **budget plan** can help you track your expenses, make sure you are spending less than you earn and highlight areas where you may be able to save money.

A budget planner can answer three important questions:

- do I spend more than I earn?
- what can I afford to spend?
- if I keep spending like this, will I go into debt?



Debt prevention

If you consistently spend more than you earn and need to borrow money to cover your costs, you run the risk of being in a debt spiral. To avoid unmanageable debt, follow these tips:

- build an **Emergency Fund** instead of using credit cards. You can cover unexpected expenses, from surprise car repairs to replacing broken appliances, without having to pay interest
- track your bills and pay them on time. **Set calendar alerts** to avoid late fees and interest charges
- **use caution** with buy now, pay later schemes. They can tempt you to spend more, setting you up for more debt if you miss a payment
- **spending less on non-essentials** is much easier and safer than quickly increasing your income or borrowing money
- look into **reducing your household bills** e.g. switching utility providers, getting a cheaper mobile phone deal or buying cheaper food brands



Guide to budgeting

MoneySavingExpert offers a budget guide and free budget planner which analyses your finances for you.

moneysavingexpert.com/banking/budget-planning/

Free debt advice and budgeting tips

The **Citizens Advice** website for West Sussex and North South East offers expert guidance on all topics relating to temporary accommodation.

Visit their website for more budgeting tips, free debt advice and to find out what benefits and tax credits you may be entitled to.

advicewestsussex.org.uk/advice/

**citizens
advice**

Budgeting tips and free budget planner

**Money
Helper**

Money Helper is a website set up by the government that offers a free online budget planner with personalised tips to make the most out of your money, including guidance on how to save on household bills.

moneyhelper.org.uk/en/everyday-money/budgeting

Financial support and benefits

Emergency borrowing

Taking out a loan to help you manage everyday income and expenditure is **not advisable**.

However, if you are in a crisis, there are a few things to remember:

- **avoid using payday lenders** as the interest rates are disproportionate and the repayment rates are high
- **never use a loan shark**, these are illegal lenders who charge very high interest rates and can use immoral methods to recover loan payments
- if you are claiming benefits, check to see if you are eligible for **budgeting loans** or **Universal Credit advance payment**. These are interest-free loans from the Social Fund, used for travelling expenses, clothing and footwear, furniture or white goods, advanced rent, etc
- consider a loan from the **Boom Community Bank**, who can support you in setting up a savings account at the same time as taking out a loan



Income maximisation – getting support

Use a **benefit calculator** to work out what benefits you are entitled to. You can also use them to work out how moving into work or moving jobs could affect your income and benefits. To find out which benefits you may be entitled to, visit:

gov.uk/benefits-calculators

If you are already getting a benefit or tax credit, you may be able to claim other sources of help:

- an **Entitlement to Personal Independence Payment** can provide a gateway to getting a Carer's Allowance or Blue Badge
- **Universal Credit** may also entitle you to help with health costs, including free NHS prescriptions, dental treatment, wigs, fabric supports, eye tests, vouchers towards the cost of glasses or contact lenses, and help with cost of travel for NHS treatment



Worried about money? Crawley Community Action can help

Crawley Community Action understands that living in temporary accommodation can bring extra financial pressure and stress. Their friendly **Social Prescribing Team** can work with you to understand your current situation and help you take positive steps towards financial security.

- access expert advice about money, debt and benefits
- connect with specialist support services
- get support with employment and training opportunities
- find free or low-cost community activities

Their service is free and confidential. Meet with the team in either their Crawley office, by phone, online, or if needed, in your home. They can work with you for **up to six sessions over three months** to help you achieve your goals.

To find out more, email sxicb.crawleysocialprescribing@nhs.net or visit their website:

crawleycommunityaction.org/crawley-social-prescribing/

Struggling to pay rent?

You can claim a **Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)** if your Housing Benefit or your Universal Credit Housing Cost element does not meet your full rent. Find out more:

crawley.gov.uk/council-tax-and-benefits/discretionary-housing-payments

More information

Visit crawley.gov.uk for more information and further resources that can help you with your money worries.

Additional resources available to you

Living outside the Crawley area?

If you are currently living outside of Crawley, here are some local authorities that may be able to offer support and guidance. Visit their websites for more information:

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council



Surrey County Council



Croydon Council



Horsham District Council



Mid Sussex District Council



Bromley Council



West Sussex County Council



Need childcare items?

If you are worried about providing the **essential items** that your children need to feel safe and warm through these cold months, Ten Little Toes can help. Serving all of West Sussex, this Crawley-based charity provides an impartial, friendly hand with childcare items. This could help to **free up your funds for food and other essential costs**.



Items they can offer include:

- clothing and shoes
- nappies and wipes
- formula
- highchairs, buggies, cots and cribs
- warm blankets

They work on a simple and discreet **referral basis**, so reach out to your housing team, your health visitor, social worker, your child's school, Citizens Advice or any professional working with your family and ask them to make a referral.



facebook.com/TenLittleToesBabyBank



[@tenlittletoes_babybank](https://instagram.com/tenlittletoes_babybank)



tenlittletoesbabybank.org

Freeshop Crawley

A supermarket in Crawley providing food, toiletries, and baby essentials without any associated costs. Accessing support is easy, visit their website for more information:

freeshopcrawley.com

Free school meals

If you are on income support, Universal Credit, JobSeekers allowance, Child Tax/Working Tax, your child may be able to get free school meals. Find out more:

gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals

Cost of living support

Can't find the support you need? Citizens Advice has compiled a list of support available in the Crawley area. Visit their website for more information:

advicewestsussex.org.uk/crawley/

**citizens
advice**

A special thanks to all our contributors

