

NYA
National Youth Agency

Exploring the Cost of Living Crisis

INTRODUCTION

Living through what is reportedly the biggest UK cost of living crisis since the 1980s, coming hot on the heels of the Covid pandemic and Brexit, it is not surprising that many people may be feeling anxious, frustrated and overwhelmed. Rising prices everywhere from the supermarket to the petrol pump puts pressure on everyone, but for those already experiencing financial hardship, the additional burden can be devastating. All of this has a direct impact on young people who may not understand what's happening, but feel the emotional and physical impact of inflation, raised interest rates and a shrinking disposable income at home, with no political power to do anything about it.

The benefits are that young people learn about the rising cost of living and how it affects them, but also gain essential money skills to prepare them for the world of finance. All of which helps build the emotional resilience to cope now, whilst reducing the potentially negative impact of economic hardship on mental health and wellbeing.



Inside this resource pack

In this resource pack are twelve session plans to explore different aspects of the cost of living, what it is and why it matters. There is no particular order to deliver them in, although we recommend that you use at least some of the activities in Session 1: Money in your Pocket, to open conversations, explore values and attitudes to money and assess young people's existing knowledge before zoning in on some of the big topics of today.

After that, just pick and choose sessions to meet the needs of the young people you work with. All come with aims and learning outcomes, a step-by-step guide to the activities, plus useful tips, and facts to help facilitators get the most out of them.

Contents/twelve sessions are:

- P2. Introduction
- P3. Post session
- 01. Money in your pocket
- 02. Taxes and the UK Budget
- 03. The Cost of Living
- 04. The Real Cost of Inflation
- 05. Minimum Vs Living Wage, Unions and Strikes
- 06. Debt - who pays it back?
- 07. Financial Risk
- 08. Savings: Informed decision making, delayed gratification
- 09. Cost of living and communities
- 10. Cooking and Diet on a budget
- 11. The cost of living's impact on relationships and family life
- 12. Self-Care and Well-Being on a Budget

How these fit within the National Youth Work Curriculum

The new National Youth Work Curriculum, launched by the NYA in 2022, provides an educational framework and reference tool for decision makers, policy makers, commissioners, youth workers and young people.

Activities in this resource predominantly relate to the Economic and Financial Wellbeing area of the curriculum. However, individual activities also link to Global Youth Work, Environment and Sustainable Development and Leadership, Civic Engagement and Participation all of which encourage participation and speaking up on the things that are important to young people.

In addition to this, it is impossible to talk about the cost of living crisis without considering the immense impact it can have on the emotional wellbeing and mental health of young people, their families, and the communities they live in. This fits within the Health and Wellbeing sector of the curriculum.

To see the National Youth Work Curriculum in full, along with curriculum guidance for delivering it go to <https://www.nya.org.uk/quality/curriculum/>

Facilitators' Guide

Each session opens with a short icebreaker activity to introduce the topic. Most will take around 20 minutes to facilitate but could be extended to last longer if appropriate. They can also be used to finish a session or provide a change of pace part way through to help maintain concentration and interest levels.

Following the icebreaker are a series of activities to explore each of the cost of living topics. The last activity can be used as a review to reinforce learning. This enables facilitators to see where more content is required or if young people need signposting to additional services, e.g. debt or benefits advice.

Setting ground rules

It's important to recognise that money can be an emotive topic, especially for those young people facing hardship due to escalating bills at home, unemployment, or parental debt. Before starting any of the activities, agree a learning contract or ground rules with the young people. This provides an opportunity to clarify the boundaries and confidentiality.

Example ground rules:

- Respect and celebrate diversity
- Listen to other people without interrupting
- Ask questions to help learning
- Recognise that we all have opinions and not judge others
- Keep personal information confidential (within the boundaries discussed)

Be clear that whilst information about personal circumstance will be respected, if there are concerns about a young person's safety or that of their family, these will be treated in the same way as any other safeguarding concern.

Note: Please remember to consider different learning styles and levels of ability to ensure that all young people can participate in a meaningful way.

Creating safe spaces

Whilst signs of financial hardship are not always visible and can affect young people in different ways, providing emotionally and physically safe spaces in which to talk, ask questions and explore concerns is important. Having calm, non-judgemental conversations about issues related to the cost of living, as well as providing information about support services available to young people and their families, can help reduce anxiety and provide reassurance.

Many young people will not have experienced anything like the current economic climate, so it is important to provide reassurance that previous financial crises were resolved and challenge any blame culture that could lead to community tensions. By building empathy and understanding, along with improving knowledge through participation in these activities, young people should feel better informed and able to cope.

Session 1: Money in Your Pocket

Money is part of everyday life, but how much notice of it do we really take? From well-worn, grubby coins to crisp new banknotes, each denomination has its own distinctive colour and value.

Aims

This session encourages young people to look closely at the money in their pocket, where it comes from, what it represents and the value that it has.

Learning outcomes

- **What legal tender looks like in the UK, who issues it and where it goes when it is out of commission.**
- **How portraits on banknotes are chosen and what they represent.**
- **That people have different values and ethics when it comes to money and finance.**

You will need:

A copy of the Icebreaker: Money quiz
Paper and marker pens
Some 1p coins
Drawing paper
Paint, brushes, water pots
Pencil rubber
Online access

Icebreaker: Money quiz

Begin by asking: 'Who likes money?' and inviting young people to share their thoughts.

Explain that whilst we probably all know what money looks like, this quiz, based on current coins and notes used in the UK, is going to find out how much we really know about it.

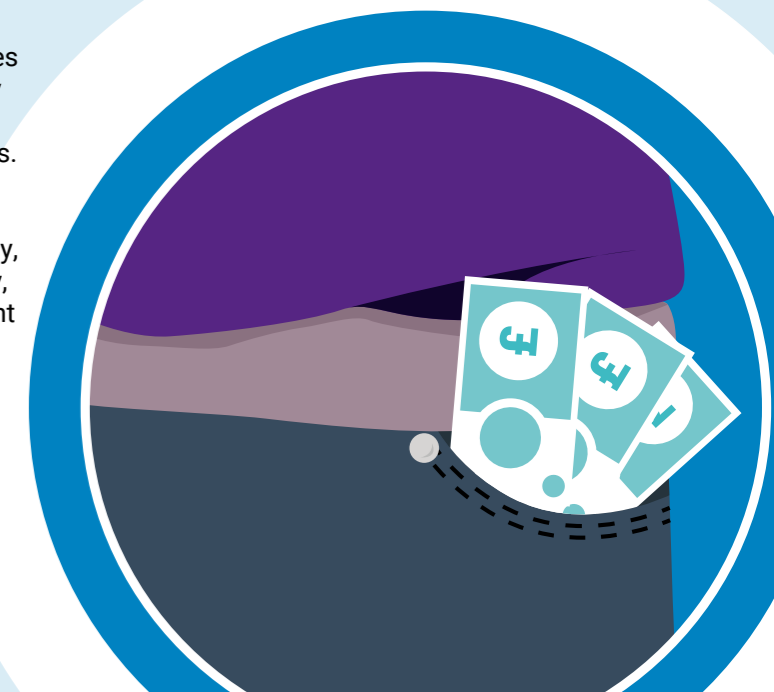
Designate one side of the room 'A' the other 'B' and the middle section 'C'. Explain to young people that you are going to read out a series of questions and then give three potential answers, A, B, or C. They should move to the point in the room that they think corresponds with the correct answer.

Facilitators note: the correct answers are underlined>.

Encourage questions and discussion as you go along:

- Is this quiz easy or hard?
- Have you seen all the coins and notes included in the quiz?
- Do you ever look properly at the money in your purse or wallet? If not, why not?
- Why do you think that everybody didn't get the answers 100% right?

Explain that the Bank of England is the central bank of the UK. It oversees monetary policy and issues currency and is also the regulator of banks, financial firms, and payment systems. It is responsible for setting the benchmark interest rates for the UK, which is the cost of borrowing money, e.g. from a bank or finance company, but is independent of the Government and politicians do not control it. To find out more visit the Bank of England website www.bankofengland.co.uk.



Activity 1: Penny for your thoughts

Start a discussion by asking young people - 'What can you buy with a penny?'

The likely answer is 'nothing' or 'not very much'. Explain that many countries, including Canada, have withdrawn their equivalent of a penny coin as its monetary value, i.e. what you can buy with it, has fallen so dramatically that it is no longer worth making.

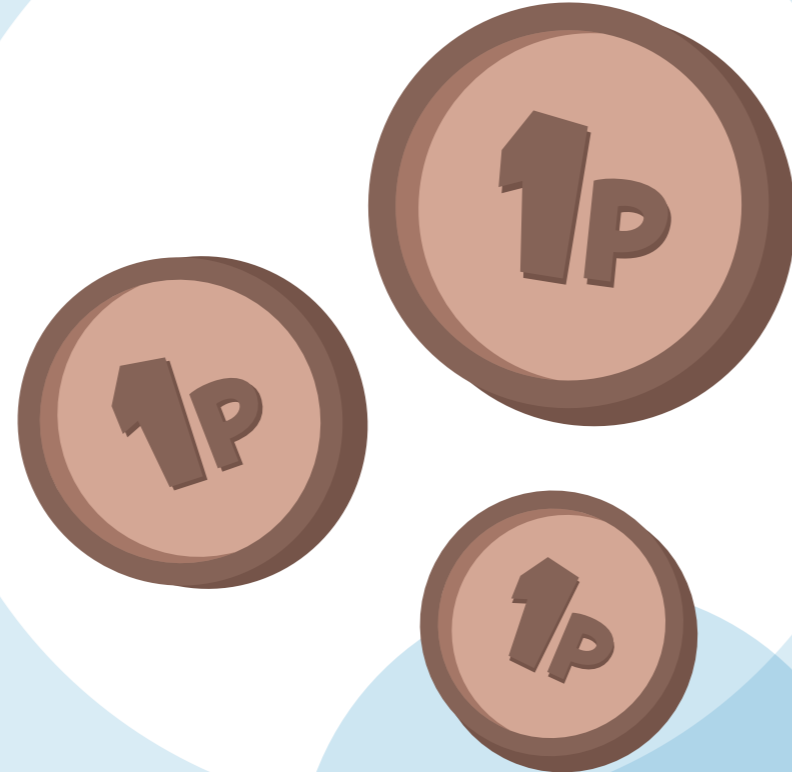
The question of whether to keep 1p and 2p coins in the UK is part of an ongoing discussion as more and more people replace cash payments with digital or mobile banking. First brought into circulation in 1971 when the UK money system changed from pounds, shillings, and pence to the money we know now, cash or cheques were for a long time the only payment options for most people. By 2016 only 40% of financial transactions were made in cash and today's experts predict that by 2026 that will drop to less than 20%.

So, the question is, do we still need a 1p coin? In groups, task young people with debating this question and coming up with a group answer and the reasons why.

Things to consider:

- Should we round prices up to the nearest 10p? For example, 49p to 50p or 99p goods to £1?
- Would special offers still seem a bargain without the penny off, e.g. £1.99 as opposed to £2?
- Would people be more or less likely to say 'keep the change' if it was more than a penny?
- Would this negatively affect charities who rely on donations?
- Should the Bank of England recall all the pennies in circulation, melt them down for scrap and use the money for something worthwhile, like the NHS or better schools?

Invite each group to share their conclusions, encouraging questions and debate where opinions differ. Finally, conduct a quick show of hands to see who thinks it likely that within five years the penny coin will no longer exist.



Move on to ask:

What happens to paper money when it is no longer in circulation?

The answer, according to the Bank of England, is that once old bank notes are taken out of circulation, they are destroyed. This used to mean burning them, but since 2011 secure services recycle paper money into soil improver or process them to generate electricity.

The new polymer notes cannot be recycled in this way, so the Bank has commissioned an independent lifecycle study to assess the environmental impact of different waste treatment options. For those interested in the environmental impact, go to Bank of England

Activity 2: Banknote role models

Ask how many people can name the person featured on UK bank notes. Explain that the Bank of England says about their choice of portraits:

'We want the characters who make it onto our banknotes to come from different backgrounds and fields. When selecting a new character, we consider who has featured on notes in the past. This means that our choices can reflect the diversity of UK society [2].'

Divide into four groups, asking group one to research the portrait on a £5 note, group two a £10, group three a £20 and group four a £50 banknote.

Invite each group to present:

- Who the person in the portrait is
- What contribution to the UK they made
- If they agree with the choice to have them on the bank note

Back in the same groups, set the task of designing one side of a new banknote featuring a portrait of a person they believe is a positive role model to others, using the Bank of England criteria as guidance. The designs can be drawn in pencil to begin with and then painted on cartridge paper, in a colour of their choice.

Facilitate gallery time where each group presents their design, including the value of the note, how the person chosen meets the aims of inclusion and how they represent a positive role model.



Review Activity: Money in action

Bring everyone together in a circle, asking each young person to finish the following two sentences:

'Money is good because ...'
'Money is bad because ...'

Conclude that money is neither intrinsically good nor bad, although it is often accused of both. At its most basic, money is simply the thing we currently exchange for goods and services. Point out that it is made of paper, polymer, and metal, which on its own is of little value. The value of money is only what we as a society give it, which could change over time, e.g. Bitcoins and other cryptocurrencies.

[1] <https://www.ukfinance.org.uk>

[2] <https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/banknotes/banknote-characters>

MONEY QUIZ

In the UK which is the highest banknote?

- A) £20 note B) £50 note C) £100 note

What is the value of the largest coin currently in circulation?

- A) 2p coin B) 50p coin C) £2 coin

In a tradition that has lasted over 300 years, which way does the monarch face on every coin in the UK?

- A) Always left B) It depends C) Always right

Each King or Queen faces in the opposite direction to the one before. King George VI faced left on his coins, his daughter Queen Elizabeth II faced right, in the new coins featuring King Charles III he is facing left.

Which coin has seven sides?

- A) 20p coin B) 50p coin C) £1 coin

What metallic colour is a two pence piece?

- A) Silver B) Bronze C) Gold

Originally coins were made of precious metals, so a gold coin was made of real gold. Today the three main alloys used in the manufacture of coins are nickel-brass (mainly copper, with zinc and nickel), cupronickel (mainly copper, with nickel), and bronze (mainly copper, with zinc and tin). Whilst the actual value by weight is now far less, modern coins are stronger, so they don't bend or scratch and last for longer.

Which coin has a picture of two lions on one side of it?

- A) 10p B) 20p C) 50p

Why two lions? The ten pence coin depicts the first quarter of the Royal Shield of the United Kingdom (England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland), showing the two lions from the Royal Banner of England.

How many coins are there currently in circulation in the UK?

- A) 2.9 billion B) 29 billion C) 290 billion

According to the Bank of England in September 2022.

Whose portrait is currently on the front of a Bank of England £50 note?

- A) Jane Austen B) Alan Turing C) Winston Churchill

Since 2021, £50 notes are made of ...

- A) Paper B) Cloth C) Polymer

£5, £10, £20 and £50 are now made of polymer, a thin and flexible plastic, instead of paper. This is because:

- It's stronger, so lasts 2½ x longer
- It's cleaner - notes are resistant to dirt and moisture
- It can withstand extreme temperatures
- It's harder to forge

Whose signature is on every Bank of England banknote?

- A) The King B) The Prime Minister C) The chief cashier of the Bank of England

The chief cashier of the Bank of England, without which it is not legal tender so you can't spend it.

How many fake bank notes does the Bank of England estimate are in circulation at any one time?

- A) Less than 0.01% B) Less than 1.01% C) Less than 10.1%

Counterfeit or 'fake' bank notes are worthless. If you are unfortunate enough to be given one, or have concerns that fake currency is being used, you can take it to a bank or notify the police. Fraud is a serious crime.

What is the Central Bank for the UK called?

- A) The Bank of England B) The UK Central Bank C) The Bank of Britain

The Bank of England (BoE) is a central bank, not a commercial bank, so members of the public can't have a current account. BoE provides banking services for the UK Government, other central banks and some financial sector firms.

<https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/-/media/boe/files/bank-notes/take-a-closer-look.pdf>

Session 2: Taxes and the UK budget

Aim

For young people to learn what tax is for and explore the values and ethics of taxation, who pays it and how budget decisions are made that affect everyone in the UK.

Learning outcomes

- Who is responsible for managing the UK economy and setting the national budget
- The different type of taxes payable in the UK and how the money is spent
- Who is eligible to pay tax and the importance of paying your taxes

Icebreaker: Who does what?

This activity encourages young people to think about who is responsible for budgets and tax rates in the world of politics, regardless of which political party is in power.

Explain that no one person, including the Prime Minister, gets to make all the decisions when it comes to the UK economy, even though they are ultimately responsible for them. Whilst this can be amazing in good times when the country is doing well, the Prime Minister can also become the focus for anger and challenge in times of crises when we want to hold our leaders to account.

His Majesty's (HM) Government consists of the Prime Minister, the Cabinet and junior ministers, supported by teams of non-political civil servants that work in government departments. Explain that MPs are elected by the British public, i.e. anyone over 18 who is eligible to vote, but Ministers are chosen by the Prime Minister from the members of the House of Commons and House of Lords. This forms the Cabinet.

Fact:

We do not vote for a Prime Minister. Each political party selects their own leader.

Divide into small groups, giving each a set of the Icebreaker: Who does what? Cards. On them they will find the UK government ministers, their roles, and a description of what they are responsible for doing. The challenge is to match the role card with the right descriptions under the headings:

Title Description Areas of responsibility

Allow ten minutes maximum for the task and then bring everyone together to share and compare answers. Encourage discussions and questions.

The team with the most correct answers, wins.

Point out that while many government powers have been delegated to the devolved institutions in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, only the UK Government can speak on behalf of the UK and represent us abroad.

You will need:

Sets of the Icebreaker: Who does what cards (one set per group of 4, cut up and ready to use)

Facilities to play this video "Tax Cuts: The Hidden Economy" by HMRC
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4vJnQitFpDQ>

Large sheets of paper and marker pens
Sticky notes and pens

Activity 1: Different types of tax

Explain that one of the functions of government is to collect taxes. Tax is the money that is collected by the Government to pay for all the things it must govern, and the revenue from taxation is held in government accounts in the Bank of England.

Fact:

In the UK you are obliged in law to pay taxes in sterling [British money]. A guaranteed source of income for the Government, this is why sterling is still a dominant currency in the world money market and unlikely to be taken over by things like cryptocurrencies.

Explain that you are going to read out a series of statements about different types of taxes in the UK. If young people think the statement is true, they should quickly raise their left hand above their head, if they aren't sure, raise it to shoulder height and if they think it is false, keep both hands down. Facilitate at a swift pace to keep the momentum going.

1. Income tax is tax paid on your earnings once you earn more than a certain amount per year. **TRUE: The more you earn, the more you pay.**
2. Excise duties are taxes paid by the manufacturers of cigarettes, alcohol, and fuel. **FALSE: It is a duty paid on the purchase of cigarettes, alcohol, and fuel.**
3. National Insurance is a tax on earnings that builds entitlement to things like a state pension. **TRUE: It also contributes to statutory sick pay; maternity pay and other work-based benefits.**
4. Value Added Tax (VAT) is an indirect tax paid on a wide range of goods and services, currently at 20%. **TRUE: Things classified as 'essential items', including books and children's clothes are exempt from VAT. Most food and drink are VAT exempt, but hot food and takeaways are not. VAT brings over £70 billion annually into the UK economy.**
5. Inheritance Tax is the money left after you have paid tax on your funeral. **FALSE: Inheritance Tax is paid on the value of someone's property and assets when they die.**
6. Council Tax is payable to your local council if you own your own home to pay for local services. **FALSE: Council Tax is dependent on the value of the property, not who owns it. Some people are eligible for Council Tax benefit.**
7. Business Rates are taxes paid by businesses on the value of their premises. **TRUE: Which is why online retailers can often offer cheaper clothes etc, as they have no High Street shops to pay business rates on.**
8. Corporation Tax is a tax based on the business' profits. **TRUE: The more profit a business or corporation makes, the more corporation tax they are expected to pay.**

Fact:

Under UK law, there is no VAT on cakes and biscuits. However, if a biscuit has chocolate on it then it is taxed at the standard rate, but a cake can have as much chocolate on it as you like but you still don't pay VAT.

To see the famous 1991 McVitie test case to determine if Jaffa cakes are in fact a biscuit: <https://www.gov.uk/hmrc-internal-manuals/vat-food/vfood6260>

Activity 2: Setting the budget

This activity explores attitudes and values to how money is currently spent and promotes conversations about priorities in public services.

In the UK, The Chancellor of the Exchequer, with the help of Her Majesty's Treasury, is the key financial adviser for the Prime Minister. The main role of the Treasury is ensuring the Government is spending public money responsibly and providing value for money to all taxpayers. This includes the funding of public services, which nearly everyone will use at some point in their lives.

Divide young people into groups of four, giving out large sheets of paper and pens to work on. Ask a volunteer from each group to draw a large circle to fill the page. Then ask everyone to imagine the money raised through taxes as a large pizza, ready to be sliced up and allocated to different public services based on the needs of everyone living in the UK.

These public services include:

The National Health Service
Police
Social Care - Adults
Education
Ambulance Service
Fire Service
Youth Services
Benefits & Welfare
Social Care - Children and Families

Write these up on a whiteboard or large sheet of paper, displayed where everyone can see it. Explain that this is not everything that public sector spending pays for, which also includes defence, the environment etc, but for the purposes of this exercise, these are the services to focus on.

The task for each group is to divide up their 'pizza' to represent the proportion of the total public money they would spend on each service if they were in charge. Explain that this money is raised through Income Tax, National Insurance Contributions that people working in the UK pay, Council Tax, and Value Added Tax (VAT) which is currently paid at 20% when you purchase most goods and services [1], so any decisions need to be transparent, justifiable and represent value for money.

Allow up to 20 minutes for the task and then invite each group to present their budget explaining how they have allocated public money and why. Facilitate a discussion after each one to explore differing priorities and the challenge of trying to balance needs with a limited source of income. How easy was it to break up the money in this way? Were some services allocated more because the public places more value on them, or because of personal experience, particularly during Covid, like the NHS?

Conclude that this reflects some of the discussions and dilemmas HM Treasury and the Chancellor of the Exchequer face each year. The Treasury advises the Ministers, and once decisions are made the Chancellor of the Exchequer tells the British public in his annual budget.

Activity 3: Can taxes be avoided?

Ideally any government wants to balance the books each year, having almost the same income as expenditure. However, when the total spending is much higher than the money coming in, like in Covid, the options are:

- To raise additional taxes on goods, which in turn is likely to push up the cost of living,
- Raise income tax, which is likely to be unpopular with everyone as it leaves them less money to spend,
- Or add to the National Debt by borrowing more money.

Read out the following:

In 1789, the American Founding Father Benjamin Franklin wrote, 'in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.'

Ask:

- Is he right? Should everyone pay tax?
- When the cost of living rises, especially after a pandemic, should people be prepared to pay more income tax to help the economy?

Show this short film by HMRC aimed at young people to explain the importance of paying tax and what happens if someone is caught evading it.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=4vJnQitFpDQ

Ask:

- Is there ever a good reason for not paying your taxes?
- Should people who avoid tax be barred from using public services like the NHS, police, schools etc?
- Should celebrities who find loopholes to avoid tax be made an example of?

Discuss, making it clear that most people see paying tax as an unavoidable duty, rather like the Benjamin Franklin quote. They recognise that being a citizen in the UK has benefits like free healthcare and education, and that taxes pay for this.

Review: The Magic Money Tree

Draw the outline of a large tree, with branches but no leaves on a large sheet of paper. Add the title 'The Magic Money Tree'.

Several politicians have been quoted using the phrase 'there is no Magic Money Tree' in response to demands for things like an increase in wages [2], help with household bills and economic support with the cost of living.

Hand out three sticky notes and pens to each person.

Ask young people, 'if there was a Magic Money Tree and you were the Minister responsible for it, what would your first three spending decisions be?'

Allow a minute or two to come up with ideas and then ask everyone to write one idea on each of the sticky notes.

Then, in turn, invite each young person to come up to The Magic Money Tree drawing, read out each of their ideas and stick them as leaves on the branches.

Review, pulling out key themes to consider for further social action projects.

Close by pointing out that as we live in a democracy, every Government is answerable to the people that elect them. If enough people eligible to vote decide that they want change, they can vote for it at a General Election. The party with the majority of votes, wins.

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/rates-of-vat-on-different-goods-and-services>

Session 3: The Cost of Living

Aim

To understand what the term cost of living means and how rising costs of essential items impact on the lives of young people now and in the future.

Learning outcomes

- What the cost of living is and how it is calculated
- Items that are considered essential for everyone when calculating the cost of living
- The difference between the cost of living and the standard of living
- How the cost of living impacts on young people's lives
- Some practical ways to cut the cost of living

Icebreaker: Who does what?

Ask young people:

When was the last time you heard someone mention the cost of living?

In pairs, ask young people to discuss where they heard the phrase and what it related to. Examples could include:

- Food bills
- Price of petrol and diesel
- Heating and lighting bills

Explain that economists often measure the cost of living by the price paid for a basket of basic goods and services that the average person typically buys. These include food, housing, and healthcare. When these prices increase, the cost of living rises.



You will need:

Activity 1: Basic Necessity Cards
Copies of the Activity 2: Cost of Living: Now and Then worksheets and pens (one per team)

Sets of the Activity 2: Money Cards (one per team)

Devices for online research (one per team)

Prize (optional)

Activity 3: Making Choices Case Study (one per group)

Activity 3: Decision Cards (a different one for each group)

Activity 1: Basic necessities

Whilst most people appreciate that things like designer goods are a luxury, the price of everyday goods and services have risen so fast that many in the UK are having to make hard choices about how they spend their money.

Divide the young people into small working groups of 3 or 4. Give each group a set of the Activity 1: Basic Necessity Cards, to discuss and agree:

- 1) Which items are necessities
- 2) Their order of priority from the 'most important' to the 'least important'
- 3) Anything they believe is not essential should be put to one side

Allow 15 minutes to discuss and agree priorities then bring everyone back together, inviting each group in turn to present what they believe to be necessary items and why, along with those they think are not.

Facilitate a quick discussion based on the following questions:

- How did it feel to be making decisions about which goods to buy and which to go without?
- How hard would it be to give up things that are not necessities, but you are used to and enjoy, e.g. a streaming service or an online music download subscription?
- Has the higher cost of things affected what you choose to buy? If so, how?

Activity 2: Cost of Living: Then and Now

Ask young people if they have heard parents or family members talking about how much cheaper things were in 'back in their day'. If not, perhaps they have heard people on TV or social media looking back at how far their money went years ago.

Put young people into small teams, explaining that they are about to participate in a Cost of Living Quiz. The quiz has two rounds, and a point is awarded for each correct answer. The team with the most points at the end, wins.

Round 1: Now

Online access is required for this round. Give each team an Activity 1: Cost of Living: Then and Now worksheet, along with pens. Explain that the team task is to look at the list of goods, then go online to find the average price to buy each one today. These can be written into the column on the worksheet marked 'Now'.

Tip: Many supermarkets are responding to the cost of living crisis by offering big savings on basic foods, so it pays to shop around, as long as these aren't lost by paying high delivery charges.

Allow 15-20 minutes before calling 'Time!' and bringing everyone together to share and compare answers. One point is awarded for each item with a relevant price next to it.

Point out that whilst the task asked for average UK prices, when it comes to big ticket items like houses, regional averages can vary greatly. For example, the price of the average house in Greater London is **£534,977** whilst the average house price in the Northeast is **£162,692 [1]**.



Session 3: The Cost of Living

Round 2: Then

To explore how prices have changed, ask young people to imagine you are putting them in a time machine to go back 50 years to 1972 when flared trousers were essential, Glam Rock and Motown ruled the radio, Coronation Street was the most popular soap opera and popular toys included a Barbie doll and a skateboard [2].

Give each team a set of Activity 2: Money Cards. The quiz task this time is to match the correct Money Card with the item on the worksheet, to show the average price paid for it in 1972.

Allow 10-15 minutes for the matching process, then call 'Time'. Again, ask different teams to share what they think the right price is and compare this with guesses from the others. Finally, reveal the correct average 1972 prices, again awarding a point for every correct answer:

Item	Average in 1972
Mars bar.....	2p
Loaf of bread.....	9p
Range Rover (first launched in 1970)	£1,998.00
Mini	£600
Trip to the cinema for two	£1.00
Pint of milk	6p
Gallon (approx. 4 litres) of petrol	33p
Bunch of bananas	18p
Fish and chips.....	25p
Train ticket London to Manchester (one way)	£25.00
First class stamp.....	3p
Ticket to Wembley Cup Final.....	£2.00
Average house	£4,265.00
Average weekly wage	£32.00

Unsurprisingly, the price of almost everything has gone up since 1972 and will probably continue to rise in the future. These prices are such a sharp contrast to those of today. Give young people time to express their thoughts, but do explain that it doesn't mean there was loads more money or that people were much richer back then. Demonstrate with this calculation, featuring the skateboard, which was on many Christmas lists in 1972 and will probably continue to be for years to come:

Average UK weekly wage in 1972 = £32

Average cost of a basic skateboard in 1972 = £3.75

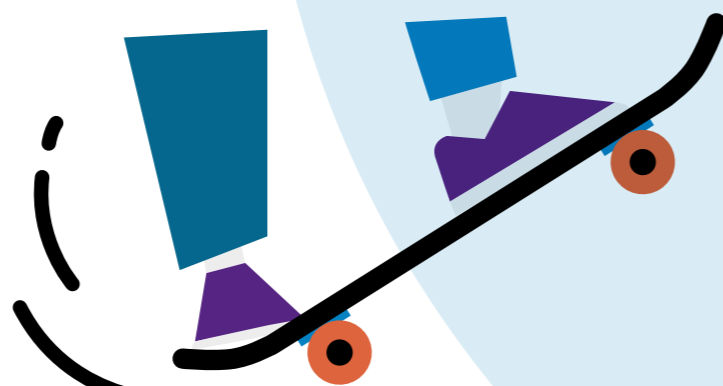
To buy the skateboard will take 11.72% of that week's wages.

Average UK weekly wage in 2022 = £558[4]

Average cost of a basic skateboard in 2022 = £55.00 (3)

To buy the skateboard will take 9.8% of that week's wages.

So as a % of the average weekly wage, the skateboard is less now that it was in 1972, even though the actual £'s spent are more.



Activity 3: Making choices

Write up this sum:

Total income (minus) Total outgoings = The 'standard of living' or what your money buys at any one point.

If wages and/or benefits and pensions do not rise in line with the costs of food and goods, people have less money in their pocket to spend or save, which threatens their standard of living. This becomes a 'cost of living crisis' when the price of essential goods rises so fast, they threaten to overtake the money coming into a household. When this happens, families can struggle to cover their basic costs, potentially leading to an increase in borrowing and debt, as well as increased anxiety and stress.

This activity will explore the potential consequences of different decisions made in response to the same financial dilemma. Divide everyone into four groups, giving them a copy of the Activity 3: Making Choices Case Study and one of the Activity 3: Decision Cards, paper and pens.

Explain that although they all have the same case study to work on featuring Johnny and his mum, Kezia, each group has a different 'Decision Card'. They have 20-30 minutes to discuss the case study and devise a scenario to explore the potential consequence of choices made by both Johnny and Kezia, both positive and negative. This will be shared afterwards back in the main group.

Tip: This activity can be done as a role play, performed as a short scene, or drafted as a graphic novel storyboard dependent on the time available and interests of the young people.

Encourage feedback after each group has shared and questions to explore the issues raised. For example:

- **How has the cost of living affected the shopping trip this family planned?**
- **Why do you think Johnny's mum, Kezia, tried to hide the fact that she was upset?**
- **Do you think Johnny has a right to feel let down or angry?**
- **Who is to blame for the fact that Kezia can't afford the things she saved for?**
- **Is it ethical to encourage people to take out more debt when they can't afford to pay for something in one go?**

Explain that whilst pay-day loans and buy now pay later schemes can look extremely tempting it is important to read all the small print and make sure they are affordable before signing any agreement. As the cost of living continues to rise, having to repay a loan could become impossible whilst still paying for necessities, leading to arrears and even County Court Judgements (CCJs) which could affect the ability to borrow in the future.

Stress the importance of always getting money advice from a reputable source, like a bank or building society, either online or face-to-face in a local branch. Some of these have specific accounts for young people and free apps to help with budgeting, so it is worth researching first to see who is currently offering the best deals.

Review: Ideas to cut the cost of living

From the figures available, households in the UK are reportedly 'suffering the biggest hit to their incomes since modern records began.' [5] In pairs, task young people to come up with some viable alternatives or ethical substitutes for at least two of the items designed 'not essential' in Activity 1. For example, if they put 'gym membership' on the 'not essential' pile, what could be done to keep fit and healthy without spending money? Answers could include walking, jogging or riding a bike.

Allow ten minutes for discussions and then invite feedback from each couple to hear their ideas. Consider sharing the best suggestions with other young people either on social media or by displaying them around the youth centre.

Tip:
Shop locally and walk if you can, it helps support local shops and businesses as well as saving money on travel costs or fuel and helping reduce emissions, which is good for the environment too.

Conclude that whilst ideas like these, along with switching off lights and turning down thermostats, can certainly help reduce the amount each person spends, it can only do so much. Bringing about economic change on a national scale is going to be down to the Government and its advisors. This will affect everyone, so encourage young people to identify ways to get up-to-date, reliable information to help them make informed financial decisions, along with new ideas on what we can all do to help ourselves.

[1] <https://metro.co.uk/2022/06/25/average-house-in-london-will-now-cost-you-534977-16889891/>

[2] <https://www.smoothradio.com/features/christmas/most-popular-christmas-presents-toys-list-years/>

[3] <https://www.skatepro.uk/c84.htm>

[4] <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/averageweeklyearningsingreatbritain/latest>



Activity 1: Necessity Cards



Activity 2: Cost of Living Then and Now Worksheet

Insert Pictures	Item	1972	Now
	Mars Bar		
	Loaf of bread		
	Weekly wage		
	Average house		
	Range Rover		
	Mini		

Insert Pictures	Item	1972	Now
	Trip to the cinema for two		
	Pint of milk		
	Gallon of petrol		
	Bunch of bananas		
	First class stamp		
	Ticket to Wembley Cup Final		

Activity 2: Money Cards

	2p
	9p
	£32.00
	£4,975.00
	£1,998.00
	£600.00
	£1.00
	6p
	33p
	18p
	25p
	£25.00
	3p
	£2.00

Activity 3: Making Choices Case Study

Johnny (aged 12) is very excited. Today he and his mum, Kezia, are going shopping and she has promised to buy him a new pair of jeans and trainers, both of which he badly needs. Money is tight since his dad left so his mum works two cleaning jobs to make ends meet, balancing this with her caring role at home for Johnny and his siblings. Kezia feels proud, she has saved hard for their shopping trip, even putting aside enough for a lunchtime treat when they finish.

But the bus fare has gone up and when they get to the shopping mall, the jeans Johnny chose online cost nearly £5 more in store. Even worse, his feet have grown two sizes, so he needs adult sized trainers, which are £30 more than the junior version, and they have to pay 20% VAT (children's clothes and shoes are exempt).

Kezia is devastated. Even without the treat, her budget won't cover the extra costs. Trying not to show how upset she is, she tells Johnny she can only afford to buy him the jeans or the trainers, rather than both.

Decision Card One

Johnny's mum only buys him the jeans. She can't afford the trainers and tells him he will just have to make do with his old ones until she can.

Johnny accuses his mum of breaking her promises. He has waited months for this shopping trip, only chosen from the cheaper brands like she asked him to and done the household chores that were part of the deal to get them.

She replies by accusing him of being ungrateful. She has worked overtime and gone without things for herself to get the money to spend on him.

Decision Card Two

Johnny's mum feels shamed by the fact she can't afford to buy her son the new jeans and trainers he needs. She knows that his trainers are too small, and his jeans too short after his recent growth spurt.

Johnny begs his mum to buy both and put them on the credit card she has in her purse. He says she can worry about the repayments later. She is not so sure; her credit card is almost up to the limit, and she worries that with winter coming she might need it to pay for food.

Embarrassed because the shop staff have now heard Johnny's pleas, she reluctantly takes the credit card out of her purse and buys them both.

Decision Card Three

Johnny's mum feels shamed by the fact she can't afford to buy her son the new jeans and trainers he needs. She knows that his trainers are too small, and his jeans too short after his recent growth spurt.

Johnny begs his mum to buy both and put them on the credit card she has in her purse. He says she can worry about the repayments later. She is not so sure; her credit card is almost up to the limit, and she worries that with winter coming she might need it to pay for food.

Embarrassed because the shop staff have now heard Johnny's pleas, she reluctantly takes the credit card out of her purse and buys them both.

Decision Card Four

Johnny is filled with anger. He loudly tells his mum, Kezia, that all his friends have new clothes and that it is unfair he wears shoes that hurt his feet. He points out that if his feet end up damaged, it will be her fault.

Kezia feels bad. She wants her children to have the things they need and feels resentful that even though she works so hard, they never have enough money. Telling Johnny to put everything back, she promises him that she will buy the jeans and trainers on Friday.

A woman at work has told her about a way of making good money, no questions asked. Kezia knows that what's on offer is not strictly legal, but she tells herself that there is no other option. She is determined that Johnny will have what she promised him.

**Session 4:
The Real Cost of Inflation**

'Inflation' is a word that currently seems to be used in connection with everything from the price at the petrol pump to the rising costs of clothes and food. But just what is 'inflation' and how does it affect the cost of living? This session explores why inflation matters, some of the causes, and how it affects individual and organisational buying power.

Aim

To understand what inflation is and how it directly affects both the cost of living and individual people's standard of living, i.e. what they can buy with their money.

Learning outcomes

- **What inflation is and how it impacts on the cost of living**
- **Why banks can't solve inflation by creating more money**
- **How world events affect inflation and purchasing power in the UK**
- **What this means for young people now and in the future**

Icebreaker: Purchasing power

In pairs, ask young people if they can remember how much their favourite sweets or savoury snacks cost when they were little, compared to now.

Invite each couple to share their examples, writing them up on the whiteboard and working out the price increase as you go along. Where more than one person shares the same favourite sweet or snack, put a star next to the original listing, unless the price difference quoted is substantially more.

Explain that in simple terms this rise in price is due to inflation, which occurs when the prices of goods and services increase over time and the amount you can buy with it goes down. This is known as the 'purchasing power' of money.

Make it clear that things are always going to go up, but it is the rate that inflation rises at which matters. For example, if a pair of trainers cost £100 in 2021, and the price for the same pair of trainers rises to £110 in 2022, inflation for the trainers ran at 10% during the previous year. This is much higher than the 1-2% generally accepted as a healthy rate of inflation in a thriving economy.

You will need

Whiteboard / flipchart paper and marker pens

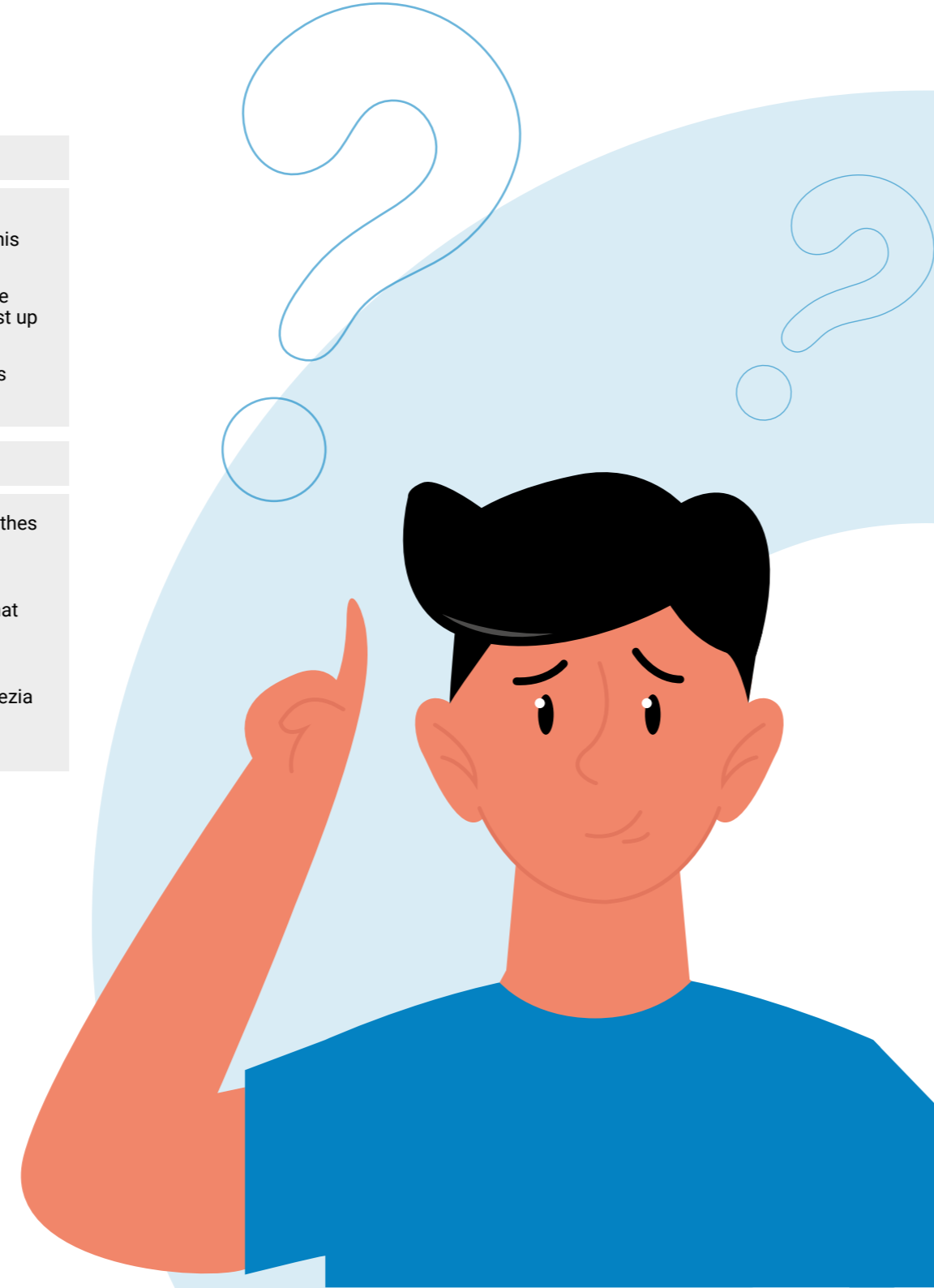
Facilities to show BBC News film "What inflation means in the UK"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMG7cg5Zjm8&t=92s>

6 x cans of fizzy drink

A packet of dried kidney beans (or similar)

Sets of the Activity 3: Fuel Policy Cards

Paper and pens



Activity 1: What causes inflation

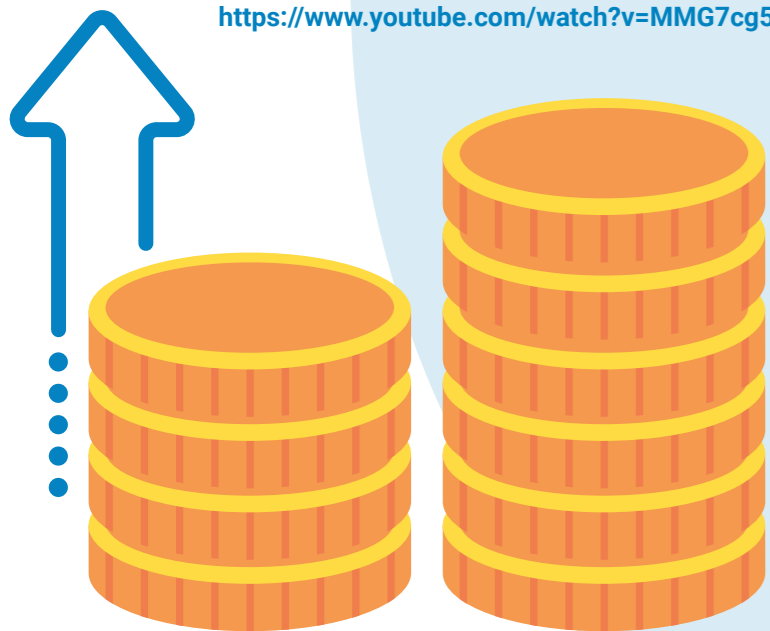
When it comes to measuring national inflation across the UK, it is measured in terms of a general increase in the overall price level of the goods and services across the entire economy.

This can be caused by one or all the following:

1. **Demand exceeding supply, for example house prices can go up if there are not enough available for people to buy or rent.**
2. **A rise in the cost of making goods that gets passed on to the consumer, for example delays in getting raw materials due to the Covid pandemic and changes in how goods are imported and exported due to Brexit and the war in Ukraine.**
3. **Too much money in the economy. When the amount of money grows faster than the speed goods and services are produced the result is inflation.**

Watch the two-minute video by the BBC News "What inflation means in the UK" which explains what inflation means and why it's happening now in Britain.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MMG7cg5Zjm8&t=92s>



Activity 2: Why don't they print more money?

The health of the economy in the UK is measured not by how much people earn, but by how much their money buys. As inflation rises, the money people have doesn't buy as much as it did.

Read out the following:

As most money is created out of nothing, by banks when they make loans, e.g. the loan made by The Bank of England to the Government for the furlough scheme during Covid, why can't they just print more cash?

Invite young people to call out their thoughts and opinions on this solution to the cost of living crisis.

Now show six cans of fizzy drinks, stacked up like a pyramid. Give each young person a random number of the dried beans, making sure some have more than others.

Auction two of the cans of soda, encouraging young people to bid using their beans and selling the cans to the highest bidders. Congratulate the successful bidders, give them the drinks and ask the others how it feels to have missed out.

Announce that luckily everyone is going to be given more beans, distributing them in large numbers but again unequally amongst the group. Everyone will now have proportionally more buying power.

Bring another three cans of pop forward to auction off one at a time, making a big deal of pointing out that you intend to keep one for yourself so these are all that is left. Wait a few minutes, whilst the successful bidders drink their can and the majority go without, before 'reluctantly' announcing that you will sell the last can, the one you were keeping for yourself. Facilitate the final auction, really hyping up the contents of the can and encouraging higher and higher bids, before selling to those willing to pay the most beans for the drink.

Review the experience using the following prompt questions:

- **How did it feel to get / not get a drink?**
- **How did it feel to have different amounts of beans to spend?**
- **Why did people spend more in the second and third auction?**
- **What impact did giving more beans have on the ability to bid for a drink?**

Explain that by giving everybody more beans, without having more cans to auction, you pushed the price up between auctions, effectively creating inflation within this mini economy. As the number of available cans went down, people were willing to pay more to get one, even though they weren't worth more.

Tip: you may want to have enough drinks to give to everyone after the auction, so you haven't created a wealth divide!

Conclude that printing more money (or giving everyone more beans) doesn't increase economic output (or the number of cans to be auctioned), it only increases the amount of cash circulating in the economy. Similarly, if the banks print more money, people might want to buy more goods but if manufacturers haven't made any more, companies will respond to the increase in demand by putting up prices. In our fizzy drink economy, giving everyone more beans to spend just caused inflation, which is a simplified version of what would happen to the economy if the banks simply printed more cash, making prices higher and the cost of living rise further.



Activity 3: Rising costs of fuel

One of the places often used to measure inflation is the petrol pump. This is because historically oil has been seen as an essential and fuel prices are heavily affected by global events, including pandemics and political upheaval. This creates a rise and fall in demand e.g. petrol prices fell during the early months of the pandemic due to lockdowns but rose sharply in price after Russia invaded Ukraine and have been continuing to rise ever since.

Fuel costs are at a record high in the UK, with the average price of a litre of petrol in 2022 at £1.81[1] compared to £1.14 in 2020. This puts extra stress on the budgets of drivers already struggling with food and other fuel rises, like heating. The Government does not set the prices paid at the pump, nor wider oil prices, as this is a commercial decision, but they do receive a tax revenue from it so many people are petitioning politicians and the Prime Minister to do more to stop further rises and reduce costs.

In small groups, task young people with becoming a 'Government Think Tank'. Their role is to discuss the policies outlined on the Activity 3: Fuel Policy Cards and then agree which one they support. This should be the policy that they think would:

- Be the most effective in terms of addressing the issue
- Benefit the greatest number of people
- Reduce the price of petrol, without creating a higher demand and pushing the price up

Once they have chosen the policy, they should create a short campaign speech to explain what the benefits are and why they think others should support it too. Give out paper and pens as required.

Invite each group to deliver their Fuel Policy Campaign Speech, encouraging a round of applause after each one and allowing time for questions and debate.

Finally, facilitate a final one person one vote secret ballot, reading out all the proposed policies again and inviting young people to write the letter of their policy of choice on a sticky note, before folding it up. Collect in all the votes, count them up and announce the winner.

Signpost those interested in learning more about the process of setting up a new campaign to the Government website <https://gcs.civilservice.gov.uk/guidance/marketing/how-to-set-up-a-new-government-campaign-online/>

Review: Looking to the future

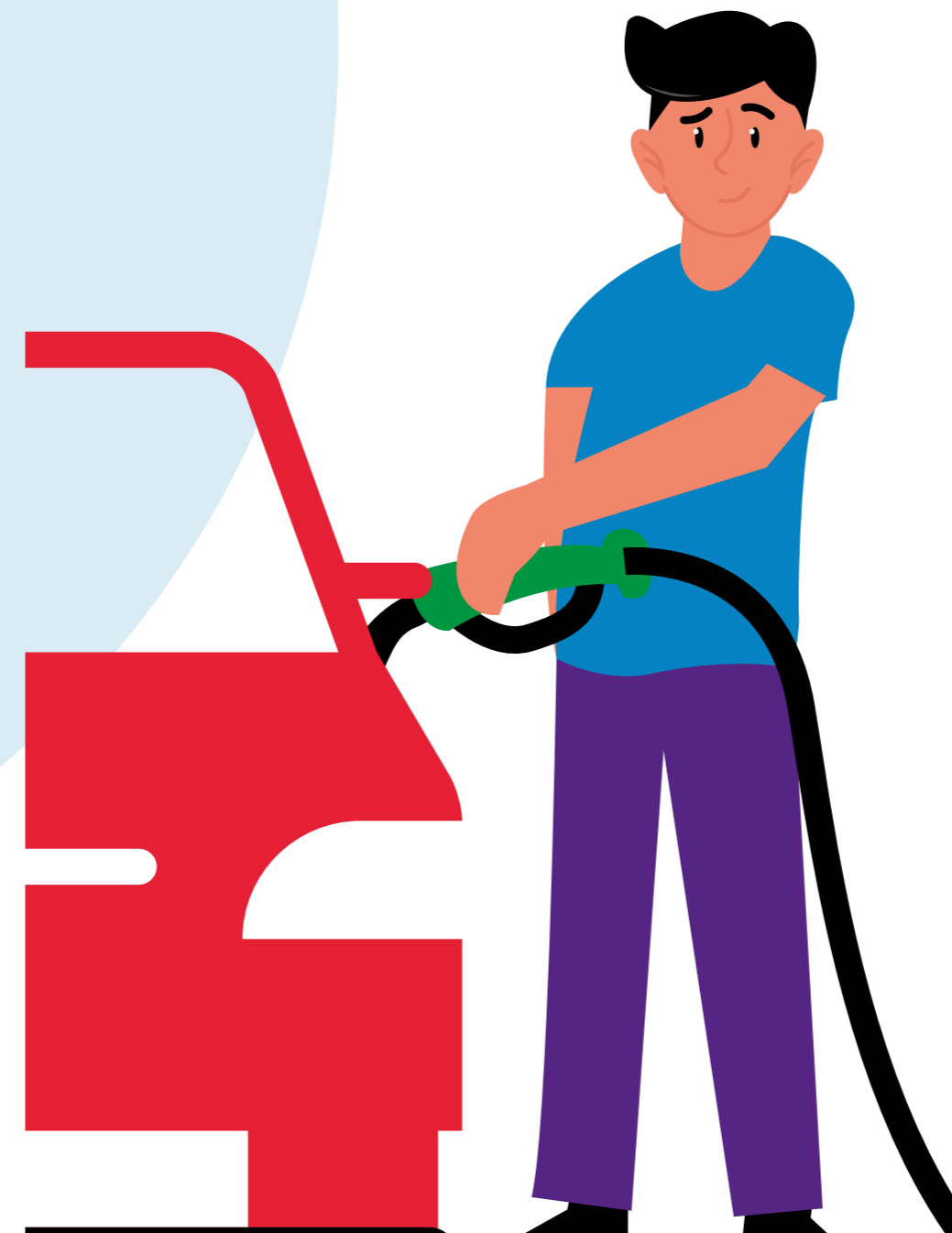
Recap that inflation reduces the purchasing power of a unit of currency, whether that is sterling or beans. Inflation in the UK is currently very high, increasing the cost of living whilst reducing the standard of living for many people, leading to what has become known as the cost of living crisis'. For those already experiencing hardship, this will be especially difficult, with many charities calling for government action to reduce the impact.

Ask young people:

'if you really want something, are you more likely to buy it now, in case prices go up again tomorrow, or save your money and wait to buy it when inflation goes down?'

Facilitate a discussion that looks at the benefits of both strategies. Suggest that if you can afford it and have the money, buying now may save you money if prices rise later. However, regular savings can help reduce the impact of price rises too. Either way, it is good to get into the financial habit of planning ahead and budgeting for the things you want, rather than running up a debt to be paid in the future.

Activity 3: Fuel Policy Cards



Policy A

Ration the amount of petrol each family can buy each month, so everyone uses less fuel

Policy B

Give everyone fuel tokens as a new national benefit to help with fuel costs

Policy C

Make a new law that each family or household can only have one car or van

Policy D

Make large companies pay for their staff's fuel to get to and from work instead of giving them a wage increase

Policy E

Launch a national environmental campaign encouraging people to leave their cars at home and walk to school or work

Policy F

Give large tax incentives to people who don't own a car

Policy G

Make oil companies pay a massive one-off tax on their profits then use the money raised to reduce the prices at the pumps

Policy H

Subsidise public transport so that it so cheap that people choose to use it instead of their own transport.

[1] https://www.globalpetrolprices.com/United-Kingdom/gasoline_prices/

Session 5: Minimum vs Living Wage, Unions and Strikes

The UK has seen a series of strikes over job cuts, below-inflation wage proposals, working conditions and pensions. With threats that many more workers could go on strike, young people may hear lots of different opinions about strikes and the impact of them, without necessarily knowing how strikes came about and what they are intended to do.

Aims

The activities in this session help young people understand what a trade union is, why people go on strike and what they hope to gain from it in times of economic crisis.

Learning outcomes

1. Know the difference between the minimum wage and the living wage
2. Understand how a rise in the cost of living impacts on what the minimum wage can buy
3. To be aware of the role of trade unions
4. Discuss why people strike for better pay and conditions
5. Identify key issues for young people in their community today

Icebreaker: Minimum Wage vs Living Wage

This activity uses a well-known 'game show' format to explore the National Minimum Wage and the differences between this, and the National Living Wage, which is higher. It can be played on a large table (or raised flat surface) or the floor.

To play, put young people into two teams and then, where everyone can see them, shuffle the cards before placing six in a row, face down, with a gap between each one. Ask each team to nominate a first player.

Tip: if you have a really big group, set up two card games to run at the same time so that everyone gets the opportunity to play.

Toss a coin to decide which team plays first then invite their first player to step forward. Ask this person one of the Icebreaker Wage Questions, which can all be answered, 'true' or 'false'. If they get the answer right, they win the opportunity to 'play' the next card by guessing if it will be of a 'Higher' or 'Lower' value to the one already on display. Aces are low in this game. Turn the card over and if the guess is correct, they get to answer another question. If the answer to this card is correct, they can 'play' again. Repeat to the last card.

If a wrong answer is given, the opponent team is asked the question. If they answer correctly, they seize control of the game, continuing from the point the last team left off. If they also get it wrong, the card goes to the bottom of the question pile and another one is drawn for a new player from the original team. This is repeated until someone gives a correct answer and play continues.

If a player incorrectly guesses 'Higher' or 'Lower' in the card sequence, play stops, new cards are laid to fill the gaps and the opponent team starts from the beginning.

The first team to get across all six cards, without a wrong answer, wins.

More information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/industrial-action-strikes>

Icebreaker: Purchasing power

Activity 1: Unions and Industrial Action Write these headings, one on each sheet of large paper, and then stick them up on the wall at different points in the room:

1. Trade union
2. Industrial Action
3. Strike
4. Picket line

Divide young people into teams, making sure each team member has a marker pen to use in the exercise. Direct each team to stand next to a different sheet around the room, explaining that on each one is a different term associated with the process of going on strike.

You will need:

A set of large playing cards

The Icebreaker: Wage Questions

Large sheets of paper and marker pens

Sticky tack

For Activity 2 collect the following: a train ticket, a letter (preferably used, with a stamp on it), a 'Save our NHS' sticker (or something else to represent the NHS) and a schoolbook

A set of Activity 2 Character Cards

Access to the internet for research

On the word, 'Go' they should read the heading on their sheet and then as fast as they can, write down everything they have ever heard relating to it, fact, opinion or myth. After three minutes, call time.

Instruct the teams to quickly move clockwise to the next sheet of paper. Call 'Go' and repeat for another three minutes. Keep going until the teams have had a chance to contribute to each of the sheets.

When everyone is back at their original sheet, instruct teams to review everything that has been written. Allow 10 minutes for discussion, as they pull out the key points and agree a sentence or two to describe what the term means. If they have any outstanding questions to ask, these can be noted too.

Invite each group to present their description, plus any key points they think are important to share or any questions that have arisen through the process. The definitions below are provided as a guide:

Trade union = a trade union is formed by a group of employees coming together to maintain and improve their terms and conditions of employment. Before a trade union can legally call for a strike, they must ballot all union members and win a majority agreement for strike action.

Industrial action = is a dispute between an employer and employees. The Government can intervene in the dispute, especially if they cannot reach agreement.

Strike = a strike is a form of industrial action whereby workers who are members of a trade union stop working to pursue a common interest or aim.[1]

Picket line = following a majority ballot (or vote), workers can strike at or near their place of work, e.g. outside the gates or doors to a building. This is called a picket line.

Ask, **'Do you think paid workers in the UK have the right to strike?'**

Invite young people to call out ideas. Clarify that whilst there is no specific personal right to strike in UK law, workers do have the right to be a member of a trade union, which can legally call for its members to strike under certain conditions.

To find out more about trade union membership in the UK go to <https://www.gov.uk/join-trade-union/trade-union-membership-your-employment-rights>

Activity 2: To strike or not?

Remind everyone that a trade union is there to negotiate the best pay and conditions for their members. In the past, trade unions have won rights that most employees benefit from today, including paid sick leave and holidays, maternity pay and weekends.

Members pay a subscription to the union, which gives them the right to ask for advice, support and representation from the union leaders, who are democratically chosen by a membership vote. A strike can only be called if the majority of members vote in favour of it.

Remind everyone that the decision to strike is not taken lightly but is often seen as the last resort after talks with management have failed to resolve an industrial dispute. Those on strike do not get paid for the day, so strike action can increase hardship.

Divide into groups, allocating each an Activity 2 Character Card, paper and pens. Explain that this is an opportunity to consider strike action from a personal perspective by reading the life story on their card, and then completing the tasks, going online to research as required.

Allow 20-30 minutes and then come back together to take turns in presenting their findings. Invite questions and encourage discussions about the ethics of strike action, union membership and workers rights and explore the wider impact of strikes, for example on family, partners and communities.

Point out that if a ballot is held and the democratic decision is not to strike, these alternative sanctions can be considered instead:

Work to Rule:

workers follow procedures to the letter and only do what they are contracted to do.

Go Slow:

workers deliberately work slowly

Overtime Ban:

all workers refuse to do overtime until the dispute is settled.

Again, facilitate a discussion to consider the potential impact and outcomes of each of these actions.

Review: Getting behind the banner

Explain that most trade unions have a banner or flag to rally behind on marches or during demonstrations. These historically bring people together, show solidarity with the cause and use imagery to represent the branch of the union.

Show this link to a collection of Union Banners on Pinterest:

<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/matthoran9/trade-union-banners/>

Give young people paper and coloured pens, tasking them in small groups to design their own union-style banner to rally behind. This should highlight what they think are the main issues for young people arising from the cost of living crisis, and what they would like to see change. Remind them that the principle of unions is to come together to effect positive change for all, rather than being about individual protest.

Facilitate gallery time, so each group can present their banner and the causes / issues they are highlighting. These could be made into a series of short videos to be shared on a social media platform, e.g. TikTok or hung up to raise awareness with other groups. Depending on how strongly young people feel about the issues raised, this could also be the starting point for a social action project to get young people's voices heard by decision makers.

Icebreaker: Wage Questions

The questions should be answered true or false

- The Government sets the National Minimum and Living Wage.
TRUE
- The National Minimum Wage (NMW) is the minimum pay per hour for workers under the age of 19.
FALSE, under the age of 23
- Small companies with less than 5 employees don't have to pay the NMW
FALSE, there is no exemption
- If you get sacked because you complain your employer has not paid you a minimum wage, there is nothing you can do about it.
FALSE, someone dismissed because of a minimum wage dispute can complain to the employment tribunal for unfair dismissal. See here for more details
<https://www.gov.uk/employment-tribunals>
- The National Living Wage (NLW) is the minimum wage for those over 23.
TRUE
- A self-employed entrepreneur running their own business is not entitled to the National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage
TRUE, they are one of several categories of workers that have no or limited entitlement to either [2]

- The hourly NLW rates change on 1 April each year. **TRUE**
- The NLW is higher than the NMW. **TRUE**
- Workers must be a minimum of 19 to be paid the NMW
FALSE, someone must be at least school leaving age to get paid it
- All apprentices must be paid the NMW, or they can bring court action against their employers
FALSE, apprentices under 19 are entitled to an apprentice rate. Apprentices over 19 who have completed the first year of their apprenticeship are entitled to the correct minimum wage for their age.
- Contracts for payments below the minimum wage are not legally binding **TRUE**
- Recent research has found that the NLW appears to have narrowed the ethnicity pay gap and the gender pay gap.
TRUE
- The gender pay gap is calculated as the difference in annual pay between jobs done traditionally by men and those chosen by women
FALSE; the gender pay gap is calculated as the difference between average hourly earnings (excluding overtime) of men and women as a proportion of men's average hourly earnings (excluding overtime).
- If an employer has not paid someone the correct rate of pay any arrears must be paid back.
TRUE; if you think your pay is below the correct minimum wage rate, talk to your employer first, then put your complaint in writing. If this doesn't work, make a complaint to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), who will send them a notice for the arrears plus a fine. If they still don't pay, HMRC can take an employer to court.
- People on the National Living Wage are not allowed to go on strike.
FALSE; anyone that belongs to a trade union can strike if industrial action is called for at a ballot
- There is a special NMW and NLW calculator that workers can use to check they are getting the right wages.
TRUE; go to <https://www.gov.uk/am-i-getting-minimum-wage>

Activity 2: Character Cards

Story 1

Raj (aged 26)

Raj is a nurse working in a large, overstretched emergency department. He worked throughout the whole pandemic, which left him exhausted, stressed and overwhelmed.

With price increases in rent, household bills and travel to work, Raj is finding it difficult to cope financially and has already visited a food bank twice this month. It was lovely that the public came out to clap during Covid but now he needs to see financial commitment from the government through a pay rise. He loves his job, but no matter what he cuts back on and how much he budgets, his wage simply doesn't stretch far enough.

When the union holds a ballot, Raj votes to strike. He can't go on much longer like this. Raj's mum is shocked when he tells her. 'Nurses shouldn't be allowed to strike. They should put their patients first,' she says.

Task

Research more about the reasons hospital staff are threatening to strike and then answer the following questions:

1. Why are hospital staff considering strike action?
2. Is Raj's mother right? Do you think some professions shouldn't be allowed to strike?
3. Do you agree with Raj's vote to strike? Why/why not?

Story 2

Edward (aged 52)

Edward is a cleaner at a large railway station. Secretly he thinks that he is probably invisible to most station users as few acknowledge him or say thank you, yet he works long and unsociable hours for low pay to keep everything as clean and tidy as possible.

Like many others, Edward is struggling to keep up with the cost of living. His pay is not in line with inflation and even with his wife's retail assistant wage, they are two months behind with the rent and at risk of losing their home.

When the union calls a ballot, Edward votes to strike. Standing on the picket line, he is shocked when a member of the public angrily challenges him: "You shouldn't be going on strike, it's just greediness. Railway workers earn over £60,000 a year!" Edward earns less than a third of this figure.

Task

Research more about the pay and conditions of railway workers and then answer the following questions:

1. How has the media covered the railway strikes? Do you think it is balanced and fair?
2. Is that member of the public right? Is it greedy to strike for more money?
3. If you had the same choices as Edward, how would you vote at the ballot? Why?

Story 3

Betty and Marco (both aged 23)

Betty recently qualified as a primary school teacher. She lives with her boyfriend, Marco, also a teacher. The cost-of-living crisis has hit them badly; money is so tight that they are having to go without things they used to consider essential. They would like to get married and buy their first home but can't afford a deposit. They both have massive student loans and debts on credit cards from their days at university and neither of them has wealthy parents to fall back on.

When the union threatens industrial action, Betty tells Marco she intends to go on strike as she thinks it's the only way to hold the government to account. Marco is horrified; he wants a pay rise but thinks going on strike is wrong because it could harm the children they teach.

Both feel angry and upset; this is the first time they haven't agreed on an important issue, and both secretly feel let down by the views of the other.

Task

Research more about recommendations to the government for a teacher's pay rise and then answer the following questions:

1. What potential impact on pupils do you think Marco is concerned about if teachers vote to go on strike? Should the impact of a strike on others make a difference to it going ahead?
2. How might having different political views affect a relationship? What can be done to stop things escalating?
3. If you had the same choices as Betty and Marco, how would you vote? Why?

Story 4

Sam (aged 34)

Sam is one of many postal workers voting to go on strike because of threats to pay and conditions. He thinks it is unfair that workers are being told that there is no money for a pay rise, whilst shareholders and top executives have enjoyed large pay-outs and bonuses. He has watched friends and colleagues have financial difficulties as their wages have not caught up with inflation. Now struggling to keep up with soaring bills and increases to his mortgage, Sam is determined to do something about it.

Sam stands up at a union meeting and says: "The bosses have lost the confidence, respect and trust of all of us. They only care about increasing their own wealth. A strike is the only thing they will understand as it threatens profits."

Task

Research more about the reasons that postal workers have given for taking industrial action and then answer the following questions:

1. What happens if the majority of people vote to strike; does everybody have to strike?
2. What happens if someone crosses the picket line to go into work?
3. What do you think about Sam's claim that bosses are reaping financial rewards, whilst workers continue to struggle? What could happen if this inequality continues?

[1] <https://www.gov.uk/industrial-action-strikes>

[2] <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage/who-gets-the-minimum-wage>

[3] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1076517/NLW_review.pdf

Session 6: Debt, Who Pays it Back?

With the cost of living rising faster than wages, many people will be looking to take out loans or living on credit to cover their financial outgoings. This session introduces young people to the topic of debt, and the process of personal debt and borrowing.

Aims

For young people to understand the importance of money management and the possible influences and reasons for debt.

Learning outcomes

- Understand the meaning of credit and debt
- Identify suitable times to use credit or debit cards
- Understand the difference between planned and unplanned borrowing
- Understand and appropriately use some of the key language relating to credit and debt

You will need:

Paper and marker pens
Copies of the Activity 1: Profiles
Sets of the Activity 2: Diamond 9 Cards



Icebreaker: Me and debt

Facilitate this quick feet first activity to find out young people's attitude to borrowing or lending money. Stick two large pieces of paper onto a wall, one labelled 'That's me' at one end, 'That's not me' at the other. Explain that this is an opinion continuum, with the space between the two poles showing varying degrees of agreement.

Read out the following statements, asking the young people to stand against the wall on the point of the continuum that best reflects their opinion.

1. **I never buy anything until I have the money saved to pay for it**
2. **If I want something, I buy it now and worry about paying for it later**
3. **I would be happy to take out a loan as long as I can afford to pay it back**
4. **I would rather go without than be in debt**

Explore attitudes to debt, finance and loan schemes as you go along.

Point out that making wise decisions when borrowing money can help you build on your current or future financial goals. Taking on too much debt or borrowing money just because it's available to you may not be the best decision. Poor debt habits can put a strain on your financial health and can hold you back from reaching your goals.

Activity 1 - Can you pay my bills?

This exercise encourages discussions about paying for goods and services using credit, and the debt that is then accumulated by doing so. Begin by asking the following questions:

1. **What is credit?** - When you are allowed to pay for goods and services several weeks or months after you have received them. A credit card allows you to spend money and pay it back to a bank or credit card company over time. A credit agreement is a loan that is paid back over an agreed period of time.

Using any form of credit usually means paying an agreed amount of additional money, called interest, on top of the original loan. This is how the banks and finance companies make their money. For example, if you have a credit agreement for £100 and agree to pay it back at 2% interest over 10 months, you will pay back £120 in total.

2. **What is debt?** - When you owe someone money that you have borrowed. You could owe money to the bank, a credit card company, or a person.

In the same groups give the two case scenarios and ask the groups to work out if the people are in credit or debt. For each profile they should consider the following:

- The severity of the debt, if any, for each of the characters
- How they might feel if they were in that situation
- How could the situation be avoided?
- If they were in the situation, how could they get out of it?

If you have time, young people could create new characters with different credit/debit scenarios and ask other groups to decide whether they think the character will be in credit or debt.

Activity 2: Diamond 9 finance

Divide young people into groups, giving each group a set of the Diamond 9 Finance Cards. The task for each group is to discuss them and then decide which they think are the most important things to know about credit and debt.

These can then be organised into a Diamond 9 formation to show the most important aspect at the top and the least important at the bottom of the diamond.

Bring everyone back together to share and compare ideas, facilitating discussion where there are differences of opinion and clarifying anything not understood.

Make it clear that no one has a right to credit. Explain that before giving anyone credit, lenders do finance checks to find out if someone can pay it back. If someone is offering a loan without doing any checks, they are probably not a reputable source of finance so should be avoided.



Activity 3: Common sense alley

Next, introduce the story of a person who really wants to buy a tablet to help them with their studies. They are very unsure of what to do and need advice from everyone here.

Split everyone into two equal groups, asking them to stand on either side of the room facing each other. Explain that the space in the middle is a 'common sense alley'.

Young people on one side of the common sense alley will argue the case for remaining in credit and therefore not purchasing the device at present. The other half of the group will try and encourage them to purchase the device, which would mean the person would temporarily be in debt.

Alternating between both sides of the common-sense alley, invite young people to take a big step forward, making a statement in support of whichever side of the alley they are standing on. For example, someone on the side of remaining in credit might say, 'wait until the tablet is on sale so you actually save money', whilst someone on the other side might say, 'everyone is in debt, what does it matter?'

Encourage young people to highlight the pros and cons of either decision, exploring the emotional cost of being in debt as well as how it feels when you save up and finally buy something. When everyone meets in the middle, say:

"What would be the common-sense approach to buying the tablet?"

Ask each person to move to the side of the 'alley' that they think has presented the most common-sense reasons for either buying the tablet now or waiting.

Suggest that whilst you may not have a common-sense alley like this in real life, when it comes to making a purchase, thinking through all the options and any potential consequences can really help you make the best financial choice.

Review: Thinking it through

From sticking to your budget to saving for the future, there is a lot to think about when it comes to spending and borrowing. Suggest that managing your budget is like managing your social life. You wouldn't make plans without making sure you were free first, right?

With this in mind, invite each young person to suggest:

- **One thing to think about before deciding to take out credit**

Examples could include reviewing all their existing financial commitments, checking how secure their income is, looking at extra work they could do to make more money, working out a savings plan etc.

- **One thing they could do if they became worried about a debt.**

Examples could include telling a trusted adult, stopping spending money on non-essentials, calling the company they owe the money to agree a lower amount to pay back for longer etc.

Before closing the session, reinforce the importance of getting professional help if debt becomes an issue, rather than ignoring it or taking out additional credit or loans to cover it. This should be from a reputable source, for example the Citizens Advice Bureau who offer free, confidential advice

www.citizensadvice.org.uk/debt-and-money/

Toss a coin to decide which team plays first then invite their first player to step forward. Ask this person one of the Icebreaker: Wage Questions, which can all be answered, 'true' or 'false'. If they get the answer right, they win the opportunity to 'play' the next card by guessing if it will be of a 'Higher' or 'Lower' value to the one already on display. Aces are low in this game. Turn the card over and if the guess is correct, they get to answer another question. If the answer to this card is correct, they can 'play' again. Repeat to the last card.

If a wrong answer is given, the opponent team is asked the question. If they answer correctly, they seize control of the game, continuing from the point the last team left off. If they also get it wrong, the card goes to the bottom of the question pile and another one is drawn for a new player from the original team. This is repeated until someone gives a correct answer and play continues.

If a player incorrectly guesses 'Higher' or 'Lower' in the card sequence, play stops, new cards are laid to fill the gaps and the opponent team starts from the beginning.

The first team to get across all six cards, without a wrong answer, wins.

More information can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>

Activity 1 - Can you pay my bills?

This exercise encourages discussions about paying for goods and services using credit, and the debt that is then accumulated by doing so. Begin by asking the following questions:

1. **What is credit?** - When you are allowed to pay for goods and services several weeks or months after you have received them.

A credit card allows you to spend money and pay it back to a bank or credit card company over time.

A credit agreement is a loan that is paid back over an agreed period of time.

Using any form of credit usually means paying an agreed amount of additional money, called interest, on top of the original loan. This is how the banks and finance companies make their money. For example, if you have a credit agreement for £100 and agree to pay it back at 2% interest over 10 months, you will pay back £120 in total.

1. **What is debt?** - When you owe someone money that you have borrowed. You could owe money to the bank, a credit card company, or a person.

In the same groups give the two case scenarios and ask the groups to work out if the people are in credit or debt. For each profile they should consider the following:

- **The severity of the debt, if any, for each of the characters**
- **How they might feel if they were in that situation**
- **How could the situation be avoided?**
- **If they were in the situation, how could they get out of it?**

If you have time, young people could create new characters with different credit/debit scenarios and ask other groups to decide whether they think the character will be in credit or debt.

Activity 2: Diamond 9 finance

Divide young people into groups, giving each group a set of the Diamond 9 Finance Cards. The task for each group is to discuss them and then decide which they think are the most important things to know about credit and debt.

These can then be organised into a Diamond 9 formation to show the most important aspect at the top and the least important at the bottom of the diamond.

Bring everyone back together to share and compare ideas, facilitating discussion where there are differences of opinion and clarifying anything not understood.

Make it clear that no one has a right to credit. Explain that before giving anyone credit, lenders do finance checks to find out if someone can pay it back. If someone is offering a loan without doing any checks, they are probably not a reputable source of finance so should be avoided.

Activity 1: Profiles

Eliana Profile

Name: Eliana
 Age: 27
 Income: £1,850 a month
 Partners Income: £2,100 a month
 Dependants: 2 children

1. Eliana & her partner pay all their bills by direct debit
2. They try not to spend money on luxury items
3. They have £130,000 left to pay on their mortgage over 25 years

Outgoings	Cost
Mortgage	£1030 per month
Childcare	£150 per month
Utility Bills (Gas, Electricity, Water, Council tax)	£450 per month
Groceries	£200 per month
Car (loan repayments and petrol)	£180 per month
Savings	£250 per month
Pension	£120 each per month
Holidays	£100 per month
Going Out	£75 per month

Look at their family outgoings.
 Do you think Eliana is in control of her money?

Adam Profile

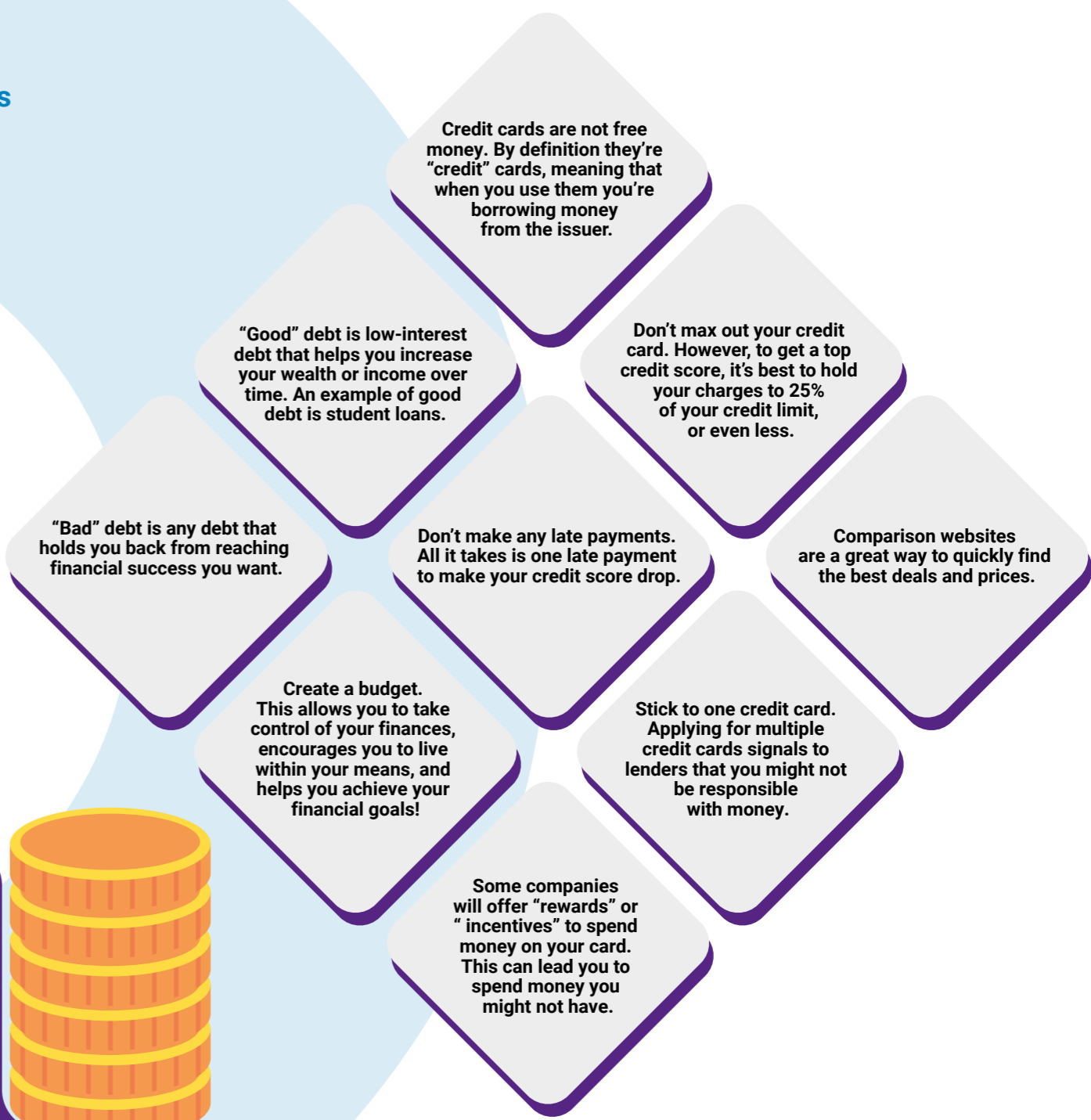
Name: Adam
 Age: 18
 Occupation: Apprentice Chef
 Income: £95 per week
 Dependants: no dependants

1. Adam lives with his parents and contributes to the bills
2. His parents gave him their old car
3. He borrowed £500 from them to cover insurance and tax. He pays them back £50 each month
4. Adam uses a credit card when he needs extra cash

Outgoings	Cost
Household Bills	£15 per week
Mobile Phone	£32 per month
TV & Music subscriptions	£28 per month
Gym membership	£16 per month
Car repayments and petrol	£45 per week
Clothes & Going Out	£25 per week
Loan from parents	£25 each per week
Holidays	£100 per month
Going Out	£75 per month

Think carefully about Adam's situation.
 Is he living within his means?

Activity 2: Diamond 9 Cars



Session 7: Financial Risk

With traditional savings accounts currently attracting low interest rates, bigger financial risks for larger pay-outs can look attractive. Whilst this can be successful there is no guarantee of a financial return and people can also lose money through investments. As the squeeze on money becomes tighter, it is important that young people understand the concept of financial risk management to help them make informed choices.

Aims

This session explores why people take risks with money, the potential consequences of different levels of financial risk and the links between risk and reward.

Learning outcomes

- **The difference between investing and saving**
- **How to compare a range of situations that carry different levels of financial risk and consider the consequences.**
- **How to reduce and protect yourself against financial risks**
- **Where to go for help and reliable advice if the risk turns out to be a bad decision.**

You will need:

Copies of the Icebreaker: Personal Risk Worksheet and pens
 A game of snakes and ladders (including dice and counters)
 A set of Activity 2: Risk Cards
 A copy of the Activity 2: Facilitators Risk Outcomes Sheet
 A set of the Activity 2: Snakes and Ladders Cards
 A copy of the Activity 2: Facilitators Guide to Financial Risk
 Copies of the Activity 3: Reduce the Risks Scenario
 Paper and marker pens
 Flipchart paper
 Sticky tack
 Online Access

Icebreaker: How risky are you?

Start by suggesting that some people are natural risk takers, whilst others are naturally risk averse. Neither is better than the other, but it is good to know your attitude to risk when it comes to making financial decisions.

Give out copies of the Personal Risk Worksheet and pens. Working with a partner, ask young people to look at the activities listed and rank them from 1 (least risky) to 10 (most risky).

Allow 10 minutes and then bring everyone back together. Go through the risks, inviting different couples to share how they rated them. Compile the answers on a large sheet of paper (or whiteboard) to find out the overall risk rating for each activity outlined on the worksheet.

Facilitate a discussion that considers the top risks and ways to reduce them: for example getting on a motorbike is safer if you wear a crash helmet, wear appropriate clothing and pass a test. Point out that some risk differs between individuals, for example eating peanuts is a choke hazard but relatively low risk for most people. However, someone with a nut allergy could be at risk of death without immediate medical attention.

Conclude that there is an element of risk in everything but considering the potential consequences and what can be done to make it safer can reduce the likelihood of anything bad happening. Point out that some risks remain too dangerous to take and these are the ones to walk away from, no matter what type of risk taker you are.

DID YOU KNOW?

Risk taking causes changes in the brain as it releases adrenaline, causing an intense feeling of pleasure. This is why some risk taking, like gambling, can become addictive.

Activity 1: Invest or save?

This activity clarifies the difference between investing and saving. Divide young people into teams, giving each team two A4 sheets of paper and a marker pen. Ask for a volunteer to write a large capital 'I' on one sheet and 'S' on the other

Read out the following six scenarios. For each, young people have 10 seconds to quickly discuss and decide in their team whether they think it is an example of 'investing' or 'saving'. Call time and ask each team to hold their 'I' or 'S' paper up high. Teams score a point for each correct answer:

1. Lily and her wife Petra buy a 3-bedroom house. They don't have children yet but hope to start a family very soon.

Answer: Investment. For most people, buying a home is the biggest investment they are likely to make. If house prices go up and Lily and Petra decide to sell, they will be able to pay off any mortgage and the profit will be theirs to keep or reinvest in another home. If house prices fall, they could be left with a debt if they want to sell. This is called 'negative equity.'

2. Rikki-Lee is excited. The start-up company he works for has offered all staff the opportunity to buy shares when it is floated on the Stock Exchange later this year.

Answer: Investment. Rikki-Lee is being offered the chance to buy a 'share', or a small %, of the business. If the value of the share(s) goes up, he makes money. If the value goes down, he may not get his original investment back.

3. Stan and Olivia are getting ready to retire. Stan has worked for the same company for 30 years so expects a good pension. Olivia has her own business but no pension. Instead, she bought a second home that is rented out, which she will sell.

Answer: Investment. Both pension 'plans' are investments. Money paid into Stan's pension, along with those of his work colleagues, will have been invested by his company, ready to pay out on retirement. Olivia invested in a property, which she hopes she can sell for a profit when she retires. She can then decide to re-invest this money in something else or save it in an account that provides interest.

4. Joe is starting his first full time job. His mum advises him to work out what 20% of his wages are, after tax and National Insurance, then set up a standing order to transfer that much each month into an ISA. She says he will hardly miss it.

Answer: Savings. An ISA is an Individual Savings Account, which offers a tax-free way to save, up to a set personal limit each tax year. To find out more go to <https://www.gov.uk/individual-savings-accounts/how-isas-work>

5. India and JK celebrate the birth of their first daughter. As a gift, India's mum gives her new grandchild £200. JK insists that they open a bank account for the baby, arguing that this way any other gifts of money can be added until their daughter is 18 and can take it out herself. India is angry. Her idea was to spend the money on a gold bracelet for the baby to wear when she grows up.

Answer: Savings. JK has opened a bank account so the money can be saved. However, he should probably have gone online and checked out the best interest rates for a savings account as it won't make money in a standard account. India wanted to invest the money in a gold bracelet. She thinks that the price of gold will continue to rise, meaning that by the time her daughter is old enough to wear it, the value will be far more than the £200 paid for it.

6. Sharon tells her family she has booked and paid for her funeral. When they say she is being morbid she replies it is common sense to pay now, as the prices are bound to go up. Besides, she says, this way I get exactly what I want.

Answer: Investment. Sharon has invested in a funeral plan in the expectation that costs will rise in the future. As the money will not be spent on anything now, the funeral company will re-invest the money in the hope of making more money. That way, when Sharon dies any difference between what she originally paid and the actual cost of the funeral should be covered, plus the company will have any profit the investment makes.

Use the following descriptions to clarify the difference and reinforce learning:

To save is to put money into an account which accrues interest over time. The amount paid each year depends on the interest rate offered, which can go up or down. For example, if you put £100 in a savings account with an interest rate of 10%, in a year you will have £110. If the account only pays 1%, and you leave it there a year you will have £101. Currently, in the UK the interest rates on savings plans are low, which is not good news for anyone with savings.

To invest is to use money to buy something that has the potential to grow in value. There is an element of risk with any investments as there is no guarantee that it will increase in value and in some cases, it could even decrease in value. What people choose to invest in often depends on their attitude to risk. Some choose not to invest at all, some take very low risks and others may make a higher risk investment.

Tip:
Banks pay interest as a way of attracting people to save with them. While they have your money, they can make use of it. For example, it can be lent to borrowers. When a bank lends money to borrowers it will do so at a higher interest rate than it pays to its savers. Therefore, it is better to save than borrow, because in effect you get paid to save whereas you must pay to borrow.

If you have borrowed money from a bank, you should try to pay this off before you start saving. This is because it costs you more to borrow than save.



Activity 2: What's the risk?

This activity uses a traditional snakes and ladders game to demonstrate the potential positives and negatives of different types of financial risk. In addition to the snakes and ladders board, dice and counters, print off a set of the Activity 2: Risk Cards and a set of the Activity 2: Snakes and Ladders cards, cut up ready to use. The Ladder Cards outline positive financial outcomes, the Snake Cards identify potential negative outcomes from choices made about money. The Risk Cards offer young people a choice, which they need to make after considering the likely consequences.

Tip: be aware that some young people will be talking from lived experience so ensure support is in place and, where appropriate, get ready to signpost to local or national support services.

Ask: **'What financial risks might people take to increase the amount of money they have?'**

Ask young people to call out ideas of what these might be, for example putting their money in a savings account, investments, or buying company shares.

Tip: explain to young people that some investors choose to only invest in 'ethical' funds e.g. companies developing renewable energy, Fair Trade, or vegan products. They do not want to invest in companies whose values and ethics clash with their own.

Be aware that ideas shared may also include things like gambling, borrowing from loan sharks, theft etc as well as things like taking out big loans, extending finance etc. Write ideas up on flipchart paper under the headings 'Legal' and 'Illegal'.

Now introduce the snakes and ladders board, explaining that this is a game to explore financial risks. Players may go up or down depending on the financial choices they make. Here are the rules:

1. **The first person to throw a 6 starts play**
2. **Take it in turns to throw the dice and then move across the board. The aim is to be the first player to get to 100, having successfully navigated all the financial risks.**
3. **Any time a 6 is thrown, the player gets another throw of the dice**
4. **If a player lands on a ladder, take a Ladder Card from the pile and read it out before going up the ladder. If someone lands on a snake, take a Snake Card to read before sliding back down the board.**
5. **If someone throws a 3, they should take a Risk Card, read it out and decide based on the scenario given. The facilitator will award a free dice throw for healthy, positive financial decisions made. If needed the discussion can be widened to include the other players.**

As the game progresses, explore the different types of financial risk outlined on the Snakes and Ladder cards. Look at the potential positive and negative consequences for the person taking the risk and anyone else likely to be affected, e.g. family. A Facilitator Guide to Financial Risk, along with some prompt questions, has been included to support these discussions. Point out that all financial decisions should be carefully considered and, as a rule, if something doesn't feel right or an opportunity looks too good to be true, it probably is.

Finally, go back to any 'Illegal' financial risks identified at the start, but not discussed during the game. Again, look at why someone might take that risk, along with the potential consequences that include getting a criminal record or even a custodial sentence. Make it clear that no matter how much financial hardship someone is experiencing, breaking the law is not the solution.

Activity 3: Reducing the risks

Give out the Activity 3: Reduce the Risks Scenario, a large sheet of paper and pens. Task young people in small groups to read the scenario and then answer the questions below it. Allow 15 minutes for the task and then bring everyone together to share and compare risk assessments and plans to reduce the risk.

Ask:

- Would you consider taking out insurance against any of these risks?
- Other than these things, what else do you think you might have to take out insurance for? For example, travel insurance, personal injury insurance, insuring a device etc.

Conclude by reminding young people that before taking any financial risk it is a good idea to do research, consider all the options and make plans to reduce any potential negative outcomes. These could include setting a budget, taking out insurance (if affordable or appropriate) and getting the best advice from a money professional.

Review: Last words

Choose from the following common sayings related to money:

- All that glitters is not gold
- Don't throw good money after bad
- Don't put all your eggs in one basket
- There's no such thing as a free lunch
- A debt paid is a friend kept
- Take care of the pennies and the pounds will take care of themselves

Ask young people, in the light of everything they have learnt through the session, what they think they mean and to consider how true they are. Finally, ask each person to answer either 'yes, because ...' or 'no, because ...' to this final statement: Money can't buy happiness.

Icebreaker: Personal Risk Worksheet

10 activities listed in the table below and rank them from 1 to 10.

1 = the activity you consider to be the least risky
10 = the activity you consider to be the most risky

As you rank them, discuss what risks might be related to each of them. When finished, compare your ranking order – are they the same? Why might there be differences of opinion?

Activity	Your Risk Ranking (1 -10)	Partner's Risk Ranking
Crossing a busy motorway by foot		
Sleeping over at a friends house		
Getting a lift in a friends car		
Smoking cigarettes		
Going to watch a Premier League football match		
Playing games on a computer		
Watching TV		
Riding a motorbike		
Skydiving		
Walking down a flight of stairs		
Eating peanuts		
Going on holiday outside the UK		

Activity 2: Ladder Cards

Good news, money invested by your parents when you were a baby matures now you are 18.		Well done, you have saved hard and now have the money to buy a new gaming device.		Good news, the interest rate on your savings account just went up.	
You invest in an ethical clothing company whose values reflect yours. Share prices go up, and you make money.		You have budgeted well. At the end of the month you have £20 left over to put in a savings account.		You have shares in a company. At the end of the year you get a dividend pay-out.	
You take out insurance against losing your job. When the company closes, the insurance pays all your bills for 6 months.		You loaned money to a friend in need. They pay you back on time.		You invested money in your future by taking a college course. It pays off and you get a promotion.	
You just paid off the last payment on your credit card. Well done.		You shop around and find the building society that offers the best interest rates on savings.		You have saved throughout the year so you can go on holiday with friends.	
You save money by walking to school / college for a month. Now you can spend it on what you want.		You make £50 by selling clothes you no longer wear on an online auction site.		You have drawn up a budget to make sure your outgoings don't exceed your incomings.	
Well done, you checked you had enough money in your bank account before you clicked 'pay'.		You discover a direct debit has been paid twice, so get a refund.		Your investment matures and £200 is paid into your account.	

Activity 2: Snake Cards

You invest your money in an online company that has invented a new protein shake to lose weight. Bad luck: it's a scam you lose £500

Your new mobile has been stolen. You decided not to take out insurance so now must pay for a phone you don't have.

You share a flat with friends, dividing up the bills equally. You can't pay your share this month as you have Covid and don't get sick pay at work.

You have been the victim of online fraud. Someone has run up massive debts in your bank name.

You need money fast so decide to play online poker. You lose the lot.

Rather than bank it, you decided to keep your cash under your bed. It has gone.

You have borrowed money from a friend. You agreed to pay it back in 3 months, now they need it next week.

You have an overdraft, but your bills have gone up so much you have now exceeded the agreed limit.

Your parents pay for your Uni accommodation. Your dad loses his job so they can't financially support you any longer.

You invest £500 in an ISA. You want to take some out but didn't read the small print and can't take money out for 10 years.

You took out a loan. The interest rate is so high you will pay back 3 times what you borrowed.

You know nothing about investments but decide to go ahead anyway. Bad luck, share prices fall and your money is worth less.

You took out a loan based on the income from your part time job. Now you've been made redundant and can't pay it back.

You apply for a credit card and you are rejected due to your previous credit history.

Your friends all have more money than you. Now you have 'maxxed' out your credit card trying to keep up with them.

You only have £20 left in your account and need £100 to cover your bills.

Your partner wants a gift that is far more than you can afford. To save face you buy it anyway.

You give money to a charity that turns out to be fraudulent.

Activity 2: Risk Cards

Someone tells you they make £1000s from a get rich quick scheme. You only need to invest £50. What will you do?

You borrowed money from the bank and are now struggling to pay it back. What will you do?

You are making money on your social media platform. Do you celebrate or invest in new technology?

You need money fast and a friend offers to introduce you to someone who lends locally. What will you do?

You inherit £250 but can't decide whether to spend it all on a big night out or save. What will you do?

Your bills have risen so much you won't be able to pay them all this month. What will you do?

Your work expects you to invest in a pension. Is too early as you only just left college?

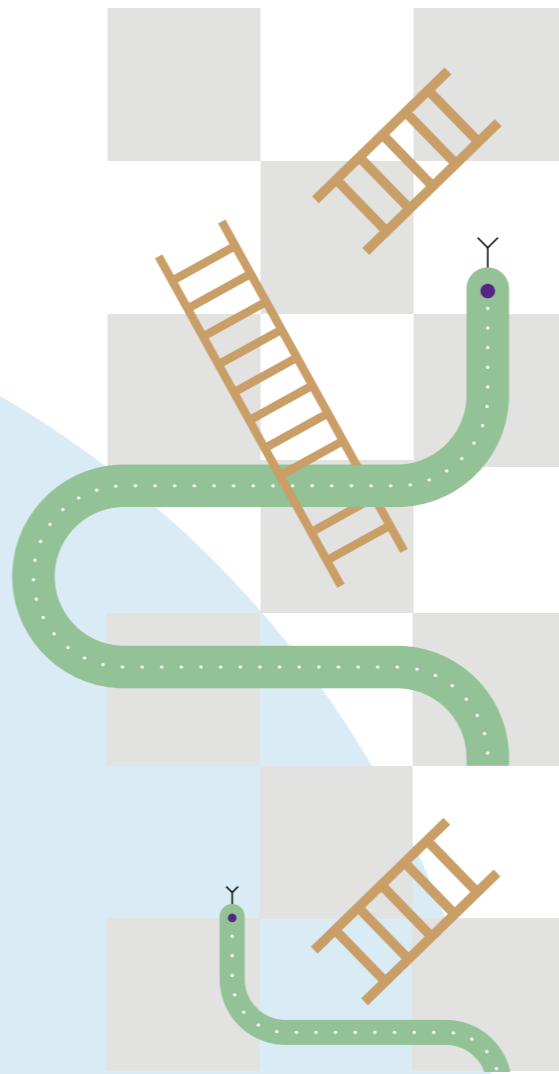
Lack of money is causing you sleepless nights. This is starting to affect relationships at home. What will you do?

You are looking to invest money. One company pays good dividends but has a bad reputation for exploiting workers. What will you do?

Your friend wants to start their own business and asks you to invest. What will you do?

Your friends ask you to go on holiday. You don't have any money but do have a credit card. What will you do?

You are online shopping and get offered a buy-now-pay-later deal if you spend another £50. What will you do?



Activity 2: Facilitator Guide to Financial Risk

Outlined here are some of the risks associated with finance, along with the potentially negative impact they may have.

Risks associated with income - the risks that might affect somebody's ability to earn a living. For example:

- being ill, injured or becoming disabled and unable to work
- job loss, redundancy, or unemployment
- being furloughed (e.g. during covid where people couldn't work due to lockdowns)
- retirement

Encourage young people to think about the impact of these, not just on the person whose job is affected, but also for any family members that rely on them to maintain a certain level of income.

Risks associated with spending or borrowing. For example:

- spending more than is being earned, for example to cover basic needs like food and housing
- overspending to keep up a lifestyle that cannot be afforded
- interest rates on a loan rising so high that the repayments become unaffordable
- spending on credit creating a growing level of debt

Ask young people to consider why someone might buy something they can't afford, pointing out that this may not be for themselves e.g. buying expensive gifts for partners or family members.

Risk of losing an asset - the more expensive the item the greater the financial risk if it is stolen, broken, or lost, especially if it is not fully insured. Most people that buy their own home do so by taking out a mortgage. Over the last couple of years, mortgage rates have increased rapidly, but wages haven't risen at the same pace. If someone can no longer afford the monthly repayments, their home is at risk of repossession. The mortgage company will then sell the property to reclaim the debt.

Risk to mental health & wellbeing - The potential losses from taking a financial risk can cause personal worry and stress and affect relationships with family and friends.

Risk to credit history - Missing one or more payments will be reflected in a personal credit history, which could make it harder to borrow money in the future.

Risk of bankruptcy - In cases of extreme financial difficulty, where all other options have been exhausted, someone could be declared, or declare themselves, bankrupt.



Activity 3: Reduce the Risks Scenario

Kenzie and Amber

Kenzie has met her friend Amber in town. They are both students. Over coffee Amber tells Kenzie that she has seen an amazing holiday deal online. She has never heard of the travel agent, but the holiday is much cheaper than anywhere else. While she has no savings and only a part time job, Amber is planning to get a credit card as the holiday deal is only valid if you pay in full when booking.

Kenzie has news too. She has passed her driving test and is about to get a bank loan to buy a second-hand car from a friend of a friend. She has worked all summer to save most of the money for the car but wants to borrow a bit extra to get a personalised number plate.

- Identify the financial risks that Amber and Kenzie are taking.
- Decide whether each risk is a low, medium, or high-risk activity.
- Discuss the implications of each risk and decide how Amber and Kenzie could minimise each one.



Session 8: Savings: Informed decision making, delayed gratification

As the cost of living bites, being able to make savings is going to be an important skill to have. Equally, being able to save can mean that there is no need to borrow money or pay for credit. This can help reduce stress and give more independence over spending.

Aims

These activities encourage young people to look closely at saving and savings, from reducing the amount spent to allowing some of the money saved to become savings to be put away for future use.

Learning outcomes

- Understand the value of money, budgeting, saving, credit cards
- Identify the difference between wants and needs
- Begin to understand how to track saving and spending by keeping simple records
- Make spending decisions based on affordability
- Explore how to build good money habits to better manage finances in the future.

You will need:

Large sheets of paper (or a whiteboard) and marker pens
A4 paper and pens
Online access
Sticky notes and pens



Icebreaker: Needs and wants.

Everyone has a limited amount of money to buy the things they need or want. This simple ice breaker opens discussions to help young people distinguish the difference between a need and a want.

Sitting in a seated circle, ask young people to discuss with the person sitting next to them: 'What is the difference between a need and a want?'

Allow a couple of minutes and then invite each couple to share.
Example: A need is something necessary to live and function. A want is something that can improve your quality of life.

Close by asking each young person to share the last thing they bought and whether they consider it to be a need or a want.

Risk to mental health & wellbeing - The potential losses from taking a financial risk can cause personal worry and stress and affect relationships with family and friends.

Risk to credit history - Missing one or more payments will be reflected in a personal credit history, which could make it harder to borrow money in the future.

Risk of bankruptcy - In cases of extreme financial difficulty, where all other options have been exhausted, someone could be declared, or declare themselves, bankrupt.



Activity 1: Making choices about wants and needs

In small groups ask young people to make a list of 5 things they need and then have them rank them in order of importance. Then have them do the same for things they want. Next, ask them to assess their lists and put in an estimated cost for each item.

Point out that wants and needs are not always as clear cut as they seem. Some items may fit in both categories, but often it is the quality or quantity that differs. For example, someone may need trainers but want designer brands; need a bag but want a small and a large one. When money is tight, hard choices may need to be made. That includes considering what to ask parents/carers for, who may have had to cut back considerably due to increased costs of 'needs' like food, heating and fuel.

Instruct young people to use devices to find out the exact amounts for the things on their needs list. Explain that this is the money they will need to cover their basic outgoings, their personal cost of living shopping basket (see Session 3). They can now turn to their 'wants' list.

Tell each group to choose one thing off their want list, then go back online to search for some bargains. Ask them to note down the most expensive price they see the item listed at, and the least.

Tip:

Always buy designer and named brands from reputable sources. Online auctions and flash deals that pop up onscreen can look amazing but may not come with the same protection. Money can be lost, and goods received may not be genuine.

Bring everyone back together to share and compare their findings. It is likely that many companies are offering competitive prices and deals to try and entice shoppers to part with their money. Point out that the most cost-effective way to buy is to save first. If you do need to borrow or buy on credit, any interest rates will also need to be taken into consideration when comparing prices.

Tip:

There are free price comparison apps available to download that allow you to scan a product's barcode to find out if you can buy it cheaper elsewhere.

Suggest that as well as shopping around for the best price, it can be helpful to let some time pass to avoid impulse buys. For example, putting items in an online shopping cart and then leaving it there overnight. If you still want it after thinking it through, you have the money and can afford it, there can be additional pleasure in finding a bargain, as well as a sense of achievement in getting something you really want.

Activity 2: Saving or Savings?

It is easy to confuse the terms saving and savings. Saving means putting away money for future use (see Session 7) but it can also refer to reducing the actual amount spent, maybe enabling some of that money to be put away for future use.

Ask young people to call out the different reasons people might have for saving. Write this on a flip chart for everyone to see. This could include:

- **For a specific event**
- **To help achieve a particular goal**
- **To put money aside for unplanned events**
- **To keep money safe**

Encourage discussion by asking for examples, e.g. saving for a specific event like a party or wedding, or to reach a funding goal set for charity. Sum up that savings in this context refers to the amount of money that is being put to one side. This can be as little as £1 a month or a one-off lump sum, for example, £30 earned babysitting. To see how savings can grow, give this example:

If Ashanti puts her £50 birthday money into a bank account this is her savings. If she then arranges to put in a further £10 per month then that is the amount she is regularly saving. By the end of the year, she will have saved a further £120 (£10 × 12 months) on top of the initial £50, giving her a total savings amount of £170 altogether. This is the amount that Ashanti is said to have accrued.

Explain that when you save money, it is likely to be spent at some point in the future, whether that's in the next few days or weeks (short-term saving) or within the next year (medium-term saving). It may even be much further into the future (long-term saving), for example, when saving up for college or somewhere to live. In some cases, the money saved may be passed on to others through gifts, donations to charity or inheritance. It's important to always get advice on this as some 'gifting' of money is eligible for tax.

Tip:

Because financial products, terms, and laws change, young people should be encouraged to always look for the most up-to-date information.

Activity 3: Delayed Gratification

Saving can bring its own sense of satisfaction - if you're saving on a regular basis and can see your savings increase as you move towards your target amount.

Saving for future spending is sometimes called 'delayed gratification' - in other words, postponing the pleasure of immediate spending to sometime further into the future. Ask if anyone can give an example of 'delayed gratification'.

Ask the group to answer the following questions:

1. Idris spends all his £5 pocket money every week on a music streaming subscription. There is currently an offer to make a one-off payment of £80 for a whole year of streaming.

- How many weeks will it take Idris to save up the money for the one-off payment?
- How much would Idris save over the year?
- Do you think it is worth the wait to save up for the one-off payment?
- What might the disadvantages be?

1. Aaron has saved up for a new game to play on his console. He can buy it online now for £40, plus £5 postage and packaging, or he can wait 3 months, save a bit more and buy the downloadable version for £55, which will have added features and levels. He needs to decide what to do.

- Identify the benefits and implications of each option.
- In your opinion, should Aaron delay buying the game? What would you do?

Review

Invite everyone to return to the seated circle they started the session in. Ask young people to come up with three benefits of someone having savings and three consequences of not having savings.

Session 9: Cost of living and communities

Whilst the cost of living crisis is often considered in terms of the impact it is having on individuals, this session considers the effect it is having on communities and the people who work and live there.

Aims

This session enables young people to explore the rising cost of living and its potential impact on the local and wider community. It also develops communication skills and considers ways to get their voices heard about community issues.

Learning outcomes

- How increases in the cost of living impacts on local communities
- That price increases and fuel shortages are caused by a series of world events, rather than individual actions
- Consider ways to support local communities and contribute to improving them

You will need:

- Paper and marker pens
- Copies of the Activity 2: News Article
- Art materials (to create a large campaign poster)
- Dilemma Table
- List of items and resource prices in your town/city
- Role Play questions

Icebreaker: What do you think?

Start by reading the following statement:

'The cost of living crisis is not just affecting individual people but changing the communities that we live in.'

Then ask the young people to walk around the room stopping to talk to others about the changes they have noticed in their own community due to increases in the cost of living. This could include:

- An increase in food banks or those using them
- Local businesses making people redundant
- Less cars on the road
- Changes in the High Street

Call time when everyone has had the opportunity to talk and invite them to find a partner and sit down. They should discuss their findings and agree on three main points to share back in the wider group.

Make a note of these to refer to as the session progresses.

Activity 1: Messages received

This activity tests some of the messages young people might be picking up from media outlets, including social media. It challenges notions of individual blame to contextualise the current financial challenges as part of a series of events that have sparked a negative chain.

Still working in pairs, give out copies of the Activity 1: Message Received Worksheet. On it is a series of statements about the causes of the rise in prices and shortages. Each couple should read and assess how true they think each statement is before scoring it 1 (not true) to 5 (totally true).

Facilitate feedback, focussing on the knowledge and sources of information used to help determine the scores given. Make it clear that whilst some media stories have concentrated on the need for families to cut back on luxuries like takeaways and coffees to solve the current problems, this is only a very small part of the picture. Whilst developing an understanding of saving and personal finances is important, as discussed in previous sessions, there are global and national events which are the main cause of the situation. For example, Covid restrictions across the world have impacted on supply chains of everything from food to building supplies, delays at ports due to new post-Brexit rules have slowed imports and exports, and the war in Ukraine has raised global food prices. Point out that none of this has anything to do with how people choose to spend their money.



Activity 2: The role of Government

This one-hour activity builds on the previous ones, to explore different points of view on key issues for local communities arising from increases in the cost of living.

Allocate young people to either Group A or Group B, giving out copies of the Activity 2: News Article (p56), paper and pens. Make it clear that whilst the issues in the 'news article' are real, it has been written for the purposes of the activity so does not represent the views of a particular politician or political party. 'The Government' is used as a general term to mean those in charge of policy making.

Allocate equally these different viewpoints.

- **Group A strongly believes all governments should buy food for people in those communities hardest hit by the cost of living crisis**
- **Group B strongly believes that people are responsible for providing food for their own families, without government support.**

For each viewpoint, encourage young people to discuss the words used in the article and what the politician says before going online to research other articles, information, and social media posts to support the view they have been given.

Once they have this, along with any key statistics, figures or quotes, each group should design a poster for a campaign. Explain that this will be presented, along with a short speech or presentation with the aim of increasing support for their given point of view.

Allow 45 minutes to complete the task and then ask each group to present their poster, along with their campaign speech.

Finally hold a simple vote on the following points to find out young people's views now they have researched the issues:



1. **External events are the main cause of this situation rather than personal failings**
2. **Governments have a duty to do what they can to reduce the impact of the cost of living crisis**
3. **We can all do something to improve our community, big or small**

Review: Community pledges

This review activity encourages each young person to make a pledge to do something that can contribute positively to the community they live in. Make it clear that this is not a financial contribution, but something practical they can do to make a positive difference.

These could include:

- **Walking more to reduce emissions as well as save money on fuel**
- **Shopping locally (where possible) to support local businesses**
- **Volunteering**
- **Fundraising**
- **An act of everyday kindness**



Activity 1: Messages received

Read the following statements and then discuss with your partner before rating how true you think they are between 1-5. 1 = Not true and 5 = Totally true

Statement	Rating	Why?
The cost of living crisis is because people have bought too much on credit		
The Covid pandemic has caused delays in global supply chains		
People are experiencing hardship because there is less sense of community		
The war in Ukraine has raised global prices on food		
If people spent less money on luxuries, there would be no cost of living crisis		
People expect to have things now, even if it means getting into debt, rather than saving up first.		
Watching TV		
Riding a motorbike		
Skydiving		
Walking down a flight of stairs		
Eating peanuts		
Going on holiday outside the UK		

Activity 2: News Article

Across the world the cost of living crisis is hitting people's pockets. In the UK, it is reported that some families are having to make the very difficult choice between 'heating or eating' as their heating bills have more than doubled in the last year.

With more price increases in food, fuel and energy expected over the next year, we interviewed two politicians with very different views. MP Morgan Strong says:

'Whilst it's true that prices have risen, people need to take some responsibility for themselves and look at how they can reduce their spending, for example, by buying value unbranded items in their weekly shop. We're all feeling the pinch, but people need to get a better job or work harder if they want more money.'

Whilst some agree that debt and feeding your family is a personal issue, others feel that the Government has a much bigger role to play. MP Taylor Miles says:

'It cannot be right that in a compassionate society those on low incomes and benefits are facing severe hardships through no fault of their own. Indeed, some parents are worried that they will be unable to feed and clothe their children if the Government does not step in now and do something.'

With further price hikes forecast for later this year, plus food shortages and the price of gas likely rise again, critics are calling for MPs from all parties to step forward and come up with some practical solutions.

Community leaders say this cannot happen soon enough.

NEWS • NEWS • NEWS • NEWS

**DIFFERENT
VIEWS**

Session 10: Cooking & Diet on a Budget

Food production has been hit on several fronts, from soaring gas tariffs pushing up the cost of running farm equipment and heating glasshouses to an increase in the cost of fertiliser. As a result food bills keep rising so people are looking for innovative solutions to save money.

Aims

This session focuses on budgeting and sustainability when it comes to cooking and managing a healthy diet.

Learning outcomes

- How to make a healthy and affordable meal plan.
- How to get the most value when shopping.
- Managing your food costs while maintaining healthy eating.

You will need:

Paper and pens
Activity 1: Kitchen Cupboard List
Activity 1: Weekly Meal Planner
Activity 1: Scenarios
Activity 2: Facilitator Tips List
Sticky notes
Digital devices to research food and recipes on

Icebreaker: Cook Smart

Ask the group to call out suggestions for cutting down on food waste and saving money on the food they eat each week. Write ideas up on some flipchart for everyone to see and discuss.

Examples may include:

- Making your own packed lunch because it's cheaper than buying prepared sandwiches and 'meal deals'
- Preparing a weekly food budget based on how much you can afford to spend
- Making a shopping list and only buying what's on it
- Not buying special offers unless on food that can be stored e.g. pasta, canned food and cereals
- Buying frozen or canned food such as vegetables that last longer
- Replanting store-bought herbs in pots and freezing unused cut herbs in ice cubes

Tip: other things that can help everyone keep healthy:

- Getting physically active (especially outdoors to boost vitamin D levels)
- Limiting the amount of caffeine or alcohol you drink and increasing your water intake



Activity 1: Eating Healthy on a Budget

Explain to the group that knowing what food you already have at home can help you buy only what you need and cut down on impulse buys. Ask the group to make a list of things that they always have in the cupboard at home e.g. cooking oil, pasta, baked beans and spices. There is an Activity 1: Kitchen Cupboard List to record this on. Alternatively prepare for the activity by asking everyone to do a quick food inventory first.

Give each group one of the scenarios below, an Activity 1: Weekly Meal Planner, pens and a device to research food and recipes on. Ask them to plan five healthy dinners to be enjoyed by everyone in the family during one week. Each meal should consist of a main meal and a pudding. The total budget for each family is £45 for the 5 meals, plus they can use food in the kitchen cupboards (as previously listed). The only rule is that every member of the family must be fed, and dietary requirements must be considered.

Allow 30-45 minutes to research recipes and complete the menu planner, noting down the costs to ensure it is within budget, and then invite each group to introduce their 'family' and the dinners they have planned for them.

Review by asking:

How easy was it to meet the needs of everyone in the family?
Which foods were the most expensive?
How did you choose food that was healthy but also exciting and delicious?
Which of these dinners would you choose for yourself?

Conclude that planning meals like this before going shopping can save money as you only buy what you need. Taking everyone's likes and dislikes into account is also likely to mean less food waste, which is good for the environment.

Tip:
Investing in a slow cooker or air fryer can help save time and money. Slow cookers and air fryers use little energy as they only need an electric socket so cost much less than a traditional oven.

Activity 1: Scenarios

Scenario One: Adams Family

Adults: Alan and Jude
Occupation: Alan & Jude are both shift workers
Children: Albie (aged 5), Aaron (aged 10), Malachi (aged 14) and Sarah (aged 16)

The Adams family are all vegan Albie doesn't like fruit except apples, Aaron is allergic to nuts and Sarah doesn't like kidney beans.

Scenario Two: Downey Family

Adults: Steve & Keli
Occupation: Steve is a retired police officer and Keli works from home
Children: Jon (aged 15) & Joe (aged 13)

The Downey family like spicy food, Keli doesn't eat fish and Jon is allergic to eggs

Scenario Three: Spencer Family

Adults: Danielle
Occupation: Danielle is a part-time nurse
Child: Remi (aged 7)

Danielle doesn't like complicated recipes and typically only has 30 minutes to prepare meals. They both love fried chicken, burgers and pasta, Remi doesn't like fries.

Activity 2: Waste Not Want Not?

Globally 1.3 billion tonnes of food are wasted every year. When we waste food, we also waste all the energy, resources, and associated carbon emissions that went into producing, processing, transporting and cooking it. This impacts on the environment and is driving climate change.

On top of this, food waste ends up in landfill that generates even more emissions in the form of methane gas. Methane is many times more harmful to the environment than carbon dioxide. With the cost of living affecting many of our food choices, this competition style exercise takes the top four wasted foods and tasks young people with finding creative ways to use them and reduce food waste as well as saving money.

Split into four groups to represent four foods that are often thrown away: Vegetables, Overripe Fruits, Potatoes & Bread.

Each group now has 20 minutes to research different ways to use the food their group has been named after. An Activity 2: Facilitator Tips List has been provided to help support the activity

Groups should be prepared to compete as once everyone has fed back with their options the whole group will vote on which idea was their favourite.

Review: One Change, One Save
Eating a healthy diet can do a lot to improve your mood and sense of wellbeing and it doesn't have to be expensive.

Ask each young person to pledge one change they will make in the next week to make their diet healthier and one thing they will do to reduce food wastage.

Make a note to review how everyone got on with their changes.

Activity 2: Facilitator Tips List

Vegetables:

- **Make a big batch of vegetable soup: freeze extra portions**
- **Finely chop and add to pasta, couscous, or rice**
- **Steam some and have on the side of your main meals**
- **Chop some into 'sticks' and have with a dip such as low-fat hummus**
- **Overripe fruit: Add them to milk or yoghurt and blend with frozen fruits to make a delicious smoothie**
- **Use them for baking a cake**
- **Add to stews and casseroles to add sweetness to the dish**

Potatoes:

- **Make a potato pie, potato gratin, fish cakes, bubble and squeak, a curry or leek and potato soup**
- **Make mashed potato with chives and serve with your meal – put extra portions in the freezer.**
- **Have a baked potato (with the skin) for your meal**

Bread:

- **Make your own breadcrumbs (by grating or whizzing in the blender) to coat fish or chicken or as a crispy topping to pasta bake**
- **If you often waste bread, why not freeze it on the day of purchase and take a few slices out when you need them**

Additional tips for reducing food waste:

- **Make your own frozen meals: double your normal meals and freeze half. This will be useful for the days you do not have time to cook and will also reduce gas and electricity bills as the meals are not cooked from scratch each time**
- **Keep an eye on your portion sizes and try not to cook more than you need to reduce waste**
- **Limit eating out because you will pay extra for convenience and may waste food you have already bought for the week**

Weekly Meal Planner

Monday

Breakfast _____

Lunch _____

Dinner _____

Snack _____

Tuesday

Breakfast _____

Lunch _____

Dinner _____

Snack _____

Wednesday

Breakfast _____

Lunch _____

Dinner _____

Snack _____

Name: _____

Thursday

Breakfast _____

Lunch _____

Dinner _____

Snack _____

Friday

Breakfast _____

Lunch _____

Dinner _____

Snack _____

Saturday

Breakfast _____

Lunch _____

Dinner _____

Snack _____

Month: _____

Sunday

Breakfast _____

Lunch _____

Dinner _____

Snack _____

Notes

Grocery List

Fruits

Dairy - Milk - Yoghurt - Cheese

Protein - Meat, Seafood, Beans & Peas, Nuts, Eggs

Grains - Breads, Pastas, Rice, Cereals

Vegetables

Other

Notes

Session 11: The impact of the cost of living crisis on relationships

If the increase in the cost of living is leading to tension, family arguments or even the threat of domestic abuse, it can be hard for young people to know how to cope and what to do.

Aims

These activities encourage young people to look closely at family relationships and develop ways of managing conflict effectively.

Learning outcomes

- To recognise truths and roles which occur in the family
- Determine how family dynamics can impact our lives
- Understand how best to help reduce tension and conflict, keep safe and work towards realistic outcomes.

Icebreaker: Getting things in perspective

Ask the group

“What kinds of relationships are there?”

Suggestions might be:

- Family
- Friends
- Romantic relationships
- Work relationships

Once you have a list you can split into smaller groups. Give each group a relationship and ask them to write down the ways the cost of living impacts these relationships. Feedback as a big group.

Tip:

If you feel overwhelmed by anxiety caused by the cost of living crisis speak to a trusted adult, like your youth worker, or a pastoral support worker at school. They may be able to put you in touch with other people or organisations that can provide practical support for you and your family as well as emotional support to help you cope.

You will need:

Paper and marker pens
Sticky notes

Activity 1: Emotional awareness and self-regulation

This part of the session explores the concepts of ‘emotional awareness’ and ‘self-regulation’. The group facilitator takes the role of assisting young people to understand that resilient people try not to get ‘stuck’ in an emotion which can prevent them from coping with the situation and moving forward. This can help with conflict resolution at home and away.

Ask everyone to write down examples of emotions, positive or negative, on individual sticky notes. These can be stuck on a board / wall, in columns headed ‘Positive’ and ‘Negative’. Leave space for a third heading ‘How does this feel?’

Discuss the emotions under each heading and then write up the third heading.

For each emotion identified, ask the group, ‘How might this make someone feel?’ writing up the responses in the third column.

Suggest that recording how we feel in different situations and regularly checking in on our emotions, can help develop insight on how to move forward, as well as build empathy with others.

“If you are tuned out of your own emotions you will be poor at reading them in other people”

Daniel Goleman – American psychologist

Activity 2: Recognising Family Narratives

Tip:

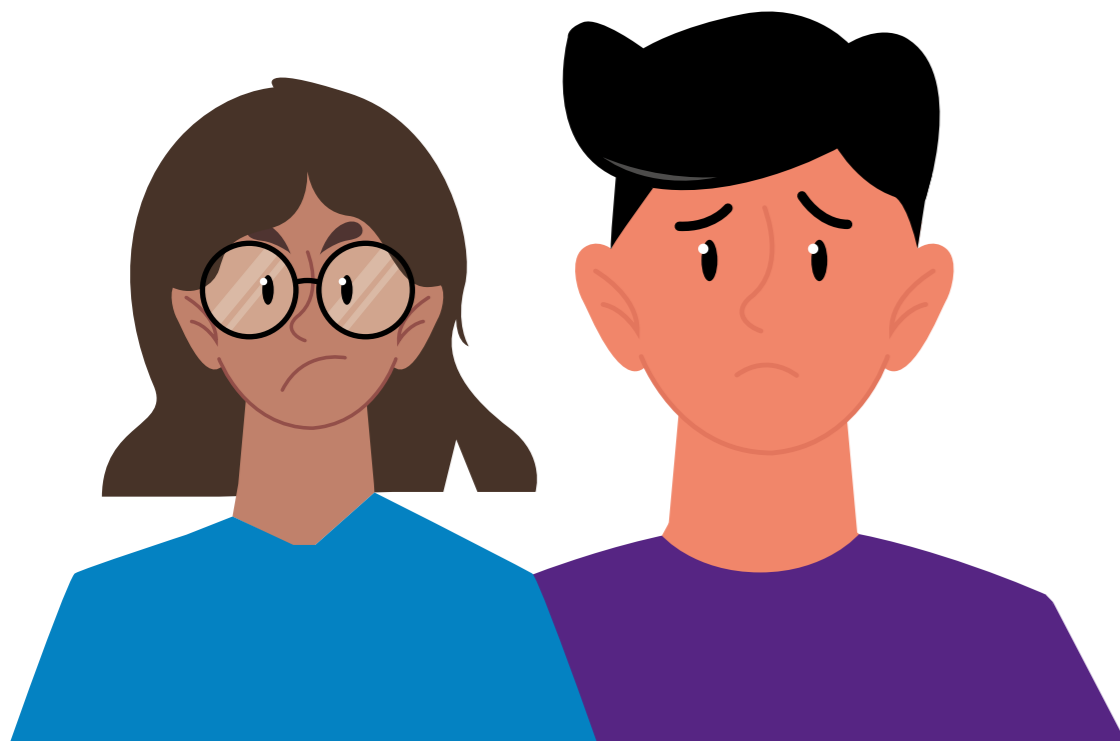
This activity can be emotive so consider if it is appropriate for group work or if it would be better for one-to-one work.

Start by explaining that the constructs we form can enable, and inhibit, how we cope with conflict and other life events within the family. Using the worksheet below, ask young people to consider their family and then make notes.

If young people feel comfortable, they can share their worksheet with a partner and feedback key points to the wider group.

Suggest that family conflict can appear in all shapes and sizes. While minor disagreements between siblings may be resolved quickly, major rifts can form between young people and their parent/s, damaging previously strong bonds. This is especially true in times of hardship, for example pressures triggered by the financial difficulties many are facing due to the cost of living crisis.

Remind the group that all relationships within a family can at one time or another be challenging or put under stress. This is not always negative as it can clear the air, provide a release for emotions, or enable people to say what they really feel, but if left unchecked it can create resentment, arguments and deeper conflict.



Activity 2: Family Narratives Worksheet

Statement	Why?
What family stories and keepsakes connect you and your family to the previous generation?	
How do you recognise conflict in your family (shouting, anger, withdrawing)?	
What roles are assigned within the family (is someone the bossy one, the smart one, the joker etc.)?	
What losses have the family faced, and what has been their effect (job, home, family members, etc.)?	
What religious, ethnic, or racial heritage does your family connect with, if any?	
Does your family value its socioeconomic status? And has this position changed over the generations?	
What role does education play in your family?	
What role does achievement play within the family? (education, athletics, finance, etc.)	
Describe an important ritual observed by the family and explain its role?	

The Benefits of Conflict - Conflicts are a fact of life to be dealt with, not a sign of failure. They can provide an opportunity for new learning and an improved relationship. Ask the group if they can think of conflicts that can have positive effects and write them up on some flipchart so everyone can see.

Here are some examples where conflict can have positive effects:

- **Confrontation in a conflict can lead to change**
- **Being aware of conflicts can increase your motivation to do well**
- **Conflicts increase awareness of problems that need to be solved**
- **Conflicts make life more interesting**
- **Disagreement often causes a decision to be thought through more carefully**
- **Conflicts help you understand what you are like under pressure**
- **Minor conflicts can defuse potentially large ones**
- **Conflicts can be fun if they're not taken too seriously**

Equally there are also certain things that can be super unhelpful in conflict situations. Before we split back into small groups, ask your group what makes things worse, and what might make things better. A good focus would be to ask young people, in pairs or groups, to think of the most unhelpful opening line for each - and then think of a more helpful one. What would you not say to:

- **Football fans in a first-class train carriage**
- **An angry-looking motorist**
- **A group of teenagers surrounded by bigger and more threatening young people**
- **A noisy neighbour**

Now we have established what not to say, we are going to try our hand at finding out what IS helpful. Give each group the following scenarios and ask them to highlight the issues and possible solutions.

Scenario One - Conflict over money

Alan and Cat are married with two children. Cat claims that Alan is mean with his money: checking grocery bills and yelling at the cost of their children's birthday presents. Along with other relationship issues, conflict had led them to sleep in separate rooms. Alan comes from a working-class family and was taught from an early age to live frugally. Alan is also worried about the impact of the cost of living

on the current and future bills. His long-standing and current beliefs underpin (but do not excuse) his outbursts. Alan argues he works hard for his money and gives her a generous amount each month, but Cat spends beyond their means. Cat wants to go on a family holiday this year, but Alan says they don't have enough money. What can you do or say to help?

Scenario Two - Cultural conflict

Despite Indira and Sanjay Singh moving to the UK while they were still at nursery age, they have retained the cultural and moral values of their place of birth: India. When their two children were born, they were also taught to be compliant and respect their parents, while friends from school were discouraged.

As the children grew older (now 14 and 16), it became clear that the conflict between the old and new culture was causing a rift, dividing children and parents. Indira and Sanjay believe their children should focus more on their studies than on 'screens' and 'socialising'. Sanjay is also worried about the current cost of living crisis and does not want to 'spoil' the children. The children both want data so they can use their phones when they are out of the house. What can you do or say to help?

Wrap-up

This session may have evoked lots of feelings within the group and in individuals as, whenever two people come into contact, the potential for conflict arises. It is a normal part of human interaction. Sometimes you're going to disagree, no matter how well intentioned each party approaches the conversation. Be sure that you have signposted throughout the session where they can access support and advice both locally and nationally.

Childline www.childline.org.uk

The Mix. Support for young people up to the age of 25. They have an online chat service, free helpline, and a text service. They support young people with lots of different issues including mental health, sex and relationships, body image, drugs and alcohol, school etc. www.themix.org.uk

Session 12: Self-Care and Well-Being on a Budget

According to Money and Mental health:

- **People in problem debt are significantly more likely to experience mental health problems**
- **People with mental health problems are also more likely to be in problem debt.**

There are over three million adults in the UK with both mental health problems and financial difficulties, and this number is growing as the economy slows. There are huge links between money and mental health so it's important that we include a session on self-care and well-being whilst talking about the cost of living. However, regardless of any crisis, learning to practise self-care on a budget is an invaluable skill.

Aims

The aim of this session is to give young people a clearer understanding of how to manage their mental health with effective well-being strategies that are either affordable or completely free.

Learning outcomes

- **I understand the importance of managing and supporting my well-being and can explain why**
- **Identify emotional experiences and outline strategies to control emotional responses appropriate to the situation**
- **Analyse conflict scenarios and work through steps for resolution**
- **I know how to access services, information, and support if my wellbeing is at risk and work towards realistic outcomes**

Icebreaker: Clumps

Divide into pairs. Ask each pair to sit on the floor with their partner, backs together, arms linked. Their task is to stand up together. Once everyone has done this, two pairs join and the group of four tries to repeat the task. After they succeed, add another two and try again. Keep adding pairs until your whole group is trying to stand together.

This is a nice icebreaker for our well-being session as it highlights that things can often be easier when we have the support of others to help scaffold us.

TIP

Small well-being goals can become a habit. Make your own goals and make them realistic. It's much easier to try something for a week than it is to keep it up for a year. You might not feel better right away, and there might be times where you feel frustrated. But try to keep going! Even making very small changes can make a difference in the long term. So, think about what it is that you would like to do more of and make that your goal for the week. For example: 'I want to practise receiving when people pay me a compliment. I don't want to just say thank you. I want to sit with it.'

You will need:

Paper and marker pens
Conflict Scenarios
Flipchart paper
Online access
YouTube video link Emotions and the Brain

Activity 1: Analysing Emotions & Building Resilience

Becoming skilled at regulating emotions is a protective factor for young people and impacts on a range of other crucial cognitive, emotional, and social processes across a broad number of contexts including decision-making, self-esteem and understanding how to manage relationships. Providing opportunities for young people to practise skills of emotional awareness and self-regulation develops their resilience and enhances their interpersonal relationships. In this activity we analyse emotions and the importance of building resilience.

In this part of the session, we explore emotions and our reactions. Can we do things differently?

Start by exploring the concept of differing emotions with your group via a discussion. This could include emotions that are powerful, that can erupt quickly and can escalate a situation versus those that don't prompt these reactions. Emotions that erupt into reactionary behaviours following something that has occurred are sometimes called 'knee-jerk' reactions. When young people react on impulse or reflex there has not been enough time to weigh up the correct emotional response or the possible consequences of their choices.

Ask the group to think about times they might have responded powerfully to a situation and to identify the emotion involved. Collate their responses on your flipchart [these are likely to include: anger, hurt, rejection, fear, disappointment, surprise, happiness etc] Following the discussion above, ask your group how much they feel in charge of their emotions. Then show this video titled Emotions and the Brain Encourage conversation via questions such as:

- **Where do our emotions come from?**
- **What role does the brain play in our emotional responses?**
- **Can you name the stress chemical hormones the brain releases if it senses threat or danger?**
- **Can you name the chemical, or hormones, the brain releases if it senses something rewarding or pleasant?**
- **The feeling brain vs the thinking brain – can you explain the difference?**

The following scenarios provide opportunities to discuss the appropriate emotional reactions if the group were dealing with the situation. Young people can refer to the emotions they compiled in the previous section. This can be completed individually, in pairs or small groups, as appropriate.

Read through each scenario and jot down your responses to the following:
What emotions would you feel in this situation?
What could you do to control emotions that may be inappropriate to this situation?

1. **You've been waiting in the queue at your local shop and someone pushes in front of you.**
2. **Your teacher sets a group task to be completed in the lesson. The others in your group start fooling around and even though you try to get them to work together, when the lesson ends your group has nothing to hand in. Your teacher gives you all a lunchtime detention.**
3. **It's break time and you see a group of your friends playing handball. When you ask to join in, someone calls you a 'loser' and no-one invites you to play.**
4. **Your parents have just read your report. They are unhappy about some of your grades/marks and tell you that you're banned from playing games online for 3 months.**

You may wish to continue the discussion:

- Not all situations are the same. What are the things that make a situation more important to you?
- Are some situations out of your control?
- What emotions might you feel in the above scenarios? Why? What emotions might the other people in these scenarios feel? Why?
- What actions or behaviours could these emotions prompt?
- Is the same emotional response required for each of these situations? Why? Why not?

Quick Tip - Take a break from self-help

Now, this may seem like a slight contradiction as we all know a good self-help book can be an amazing way to learn, progress and evolve, but sometimes we need a break from constantly trying to improve ourselves. Perhaps, before bed, choose a fiction book every other night and lose yourself in a story, this way you still get the relaxation from reading but the cogs in your brain can have a rest from the constant criticism of your current ways. You might find that taking a break from consuming so much information may give you time to process and implement it, after all, small changes are better than drastic ones. Give it some thought.



Activity 2: The Advertising Campaign

The good news is there isn't a perfect, correct, or best way to approach your self-care routine. Wellness and mental health are about whatever you need to feel happier or more relaxed. For some people, that means watching a rom com while taking a bubble bath. For others, it may be whipping up an indulgent dessert, firing up a yoga app, checking in with an online therapist, going for a solo walk around the neighbourhood. And for others, it's lighting a beautifully scented candle and taking an hour to read, to work on a jigsaw puzzle, or to journal.

In the next activity we are going to create an advertising campaign that will encourage the group to take up a well-being challenge.

With your group collate a list of well-being tools and techniques you can use to support people's mental health. Write these up on some flipchart so that your groups can use them for reference and ideas. Young people may like to research their ideas online also to create the ultimate campaign. Some examples might include:

- Physical health – exercise, sleep, diet
- Mental health – emotional intelligence, coping strategies, positive self-talk, balanced lifestyle, interests/hobbies, social life
- Emotional agility – ability to unhook from unhelpful patterns of thought and behaviour
- Problem solving skills
- Stress management strategies
- Help seeking
- Supporting friends and family
- Engaging in school and community wellbeing activities
- Contributing to school & community wellbeing ongoing improvement



The layout of each campaign should answer the following questions.

- Who is your target audience? e.g. young men and women
- What will you use as your selling technique? How will you get them to want your product?
- What is the concept for the ad? e.g. what will the audience see or hear in this ad?
- What is the image you hope to produce? e.g. sexy, macho, laid back, superior, rewarding, relaxing
- What is the secret promise in the ad?
- Where has this technique been used in the other ads?
- **VERY IMPORTANT** - Every campaign must have information on, at least one place to get free confidential advice if down or worried.

Wrap-up

In conclusion to this activity make sure your group has time to talk and know where they are going for further support. There are several local organisations and helplines which are usually easily accessible through your local council. Below we have listed national organisations that you may want to share with your young people. We recommend checking websites out before you signpost a young person. The website may not be relevant, may need updating or may not be easy to navigate for your young person. Checking it out before allows you to see what is available but also will help you promote the support service in a way that evokes a young person to access it and the support available.

Signposting to specialised organisations

Alumina selfharm.co.uk

An online, 7-week course to help people from 14 to 19 who self-harm.

Anxiety UK anxietyuk.org.uk

Advice, support, and information for people who experience anxiety.

03444 775 774

07537 416 905 (textline)

Beat beateatingdisorders.co.uk

Helpline, webchat, and online support groups for people with eating problems, like anorexia and bulimia.

0808 801 0677 (England)

0808 801 0433 (Wales)

Calm Harm calmharm.co.uk

A smartphone app for people over 13, with activities to help resist or manage the urge to self-harm.

Me and My Mind meandmymind.nhs.uk

Advice and support for young people experiencing possible symptoms of mental health problems, like hearing voices or having unusual thoughts. Some services are only available in certain London boroughs.

No Panic nopanic.org.uk/no-panic-youth-hub

Provides support to young people experiencing panic attacks and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). Offers a 6-week Youth Mentoring Scheme online or by phone.

0330 606 1174

OCD Youth ocdyouth.org

Information and resources for young people with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). Provides an email helpline, support group, online network and discussion group.

The OLLIE Foundation

theolliefoundation.org

Help and advice for young people experiencing suicidal feelings. Provides support and information for anyone worried about another young person.

Papyrus HOPELINEUK

pat@papyrus-uk.org - papyrus-uk.org

Support and advice for people under 35 experiencing suicidal thoughts or finding it hard to cope. Provides support for anyone concerned about another young person.

0800 068 4141

07860 039967 (textline)

Self-Injury Support

selfinjurysupport.org.uk

Supports women and girls who self-harm or have experienced trauma and abuse. Offers information and self-help tools online for anyone to use.

0808 800 8088

07537 432444 (textline)

Voice Collective voicollective.co.uk

Offers peer support, plus support to parents, carers and families.

Information & support for people under 25 who:

- **Hear voices**
- **See visions**
- **Experience other sensory issues or beliefs**

Bayo bayo.ubele.org

An online search tool to find mental health and wellbeing support or services, run by and for the Black community.

Being Gay is OK bgiok.org.uk

Provides advice and information for LGBTIQ+ people under 25.

Kids of Colour kidsofcolour.com

Online platform for young people to learn about race, identity and culture, and to challenge racism. Offers a YouTube channel, summer school and workshops.

Mermaids UK mermaidsuk.org.uk

Support for transgender, nonbinary and gender-diverse people up to 18. Runs events, local groups, online courses, and a webchat.

0808 801 0400

Muslim Youth Helpline myh.org.uk

Provides faith and culturally sensitive support to young Muslims by phone, webchat, WhatsApp, and email.

0808 808 2008

The Proud Trust theproudtrust.org

Support for LGBTIQ+ young people through youth groups, peer support, mentoring schemes and a webchat.

0161 660 3347

Stonewall stonewall.org.uk

Information and advice for LGBTIQ+ people on a range of issues, like coming out and hate crimes. Provides an information phoneline for people and their families.

0800 050 2020 (information line)

Trussell Trust www.trusselltrust.org

Support a nationwide network of food bank and emergency food, and campaign for change to meet the need for food banks in the UK



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These resources were commissioned by the National Youth Agency.
All content was produced by Vanessa Rogers and Charlotte Gordon.
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Registration No. 2912597 | Charity No. 1035804

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