

How to manage your money

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This leaflet explains how best to manage your money and make sure you do not get into debt. It lists the best and worst methods for borrowing money and it explains what happens if you owe us rent.

Remember

If you get into problems with your money there are lots of ways to deal with it.

We are here to help!

T. 01225 715 715

E. info@selwoodhousing.com
selwoodhousing.com



Banking

Having a bank account is vital for managing your money. State benefits will only be paid into a bank account.

Getting a bank account

All banks offer a basic bank account. Basic bank accounts are available to everyone, including people who have a poor credit rating because they are (or have been) in debt.

You will need to manage your bank account properly – banks will charge you if you are overdrawn. To help you avoid going over drawn we have given some advice on budgeting later in this leaflet.

Credit unions

Credit unions can help you to save money on a regular basis and can loan money at a reasonable interest rate. They often lend to people the banks would refuse.

If you live or work in Wiltshire you can join the Wiltshire & Swindon Credit Union:

wascu.co.uk

For tenants in Somerset, the Mendip Community Credit Union is a good local one.

mendipcommunitycu.org.uk



Benefits



Many people are seeing their benefits reduced as part of welfare reform. It is important to know what you are entitled to. The following websites have benefit calculators which can show what you are entitled to.

- **Turn2Us**
- **The Department for Work and Pensions**

Housing Benefit is managed by your local council – you will need to contact them if you want to apply for Housing Benefit or if you need to tell them about any changes to your circumstances. If you need help filling in the benefit form, please contact us.



Budgeting

Managing your household budget is the best way to avoid getting into debt.

If your outgoings are more than your income, look carefully at what you are spending your money on. This may show where some of your higher costs are and what you need to work on reducing.



Borrowing money

There are several types of lending and they all involve paying interest. However, some interest rates are much higher than others, and some are even illegal. The following table lists loans in the order of how much interest they charge and the risk involved.

Lender	Description	Annual percentage rate (APR)
Banks and credit unions	These loans are the most affordable.	Around 6% to 10% APR
Credit cards	Higher interest credit arrangements. Credit cards can be useful for one-off large purchases that you pay back either when the bill comes or over a period of time.	Around 6% to 10% APR

Be cautious of these lenders:

Doorstep lenders	High-interest loans provided by people who come to your door.	About 400% APR
Pay-day loans and cheque shops	Very high-interest loans, from high street and internet shops.	Over 3,000% APR



Loan sharks	These loans are illegal and cannot be enforced by the lender. There will be no loan agreement and there will be no limits on the amount of interest charged. Loan sharks can be frightening people, who are often involved in other forms of crime.	8,000% to 120,000% APR
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Dealing with debt

Most people have some form of debt. Sometimes debt gets out of hand. If you find that you are having difficulty making ends meet, you should get proper debt advice.

We're unable to give debt advice directly but below are some details of charities and services that can help.

- **National Debtline**
- **Step Change Debt**
- **Wiltshire Citizens Advice**
- **BANES Citizens Advice**





Help with your rent

Paying your rent is very important – we use the money to pay for the services we provide to you. If you choose not to pay your rent or work with us to sort out your rent problem, you could lose your home!

If you are struggling to pay your rent, tell us, speak to your account manager or contact the money advice team. You can contact an account manager by calling 01225 715 715 or by emailing info@selwoodhousing.com.


How can I pay my rent

We have lots of easy ways to pay your rent. They are all explained on our website:

selwoodhousing.com/payyourrent

Paying by direct debit is the safest and easiest way to pay your rent.

You can get a direct debit form by calling our customer support team.



What happens if I don't pay my rent?



If you don't pay your rent, we will write to you to let you know that you owe us money and that you should contact us immediately to sort out any problems. When you owe us money we say that you are 'in arrears' with your rent.


We won't take any action if you have agreed an affordable repayment plan with us and are sticking to this. If you don't work with us to make payments, we have to take action. We see eviction as a last resort, but you could lose your home if you continue to owe us rent and are not making regular repayments to reduce the debt.

What action will you take?

If you don't let us know about the problem and the amount that you owe continues to increase, we will serve a 'notice of seeking possession'. This is a legal document that gives you two weeks' notice to work with us to sort out the problem with the rent you owe. We see it as a last chance.

If you do not sort out your debt within two weeks or make an agreement with us to pay it, we will take you to court, and you must attend. The judge will grant an order against you. You will be responsible for paying all the legal fees, which will cost about £100.





If you don't pay after the court tells you that you have to, you could lose your home. We will issue a warrant for possession. This means that a bailiff from the court will come to your home to evict you unless you pay in full or make a 'stay hearing' request, asking the judge to delay any action.

How can I stop legal action?


Your rent is your responsibility. We don't want to take you to court or make you lose your home – we just want you to pay your rent.

We won't take any action if you:

- pay your arrears in full;
- agree a repayment plan and make regular payments to clear your arrears; or
- are eligible for Housing Benefit and are waiting for your payment.

Remember

We don't want you to lose your home, we want to help you pay your rent. If you have problems, contact our money advice team.



If you need this information in large print, on audio tape, CD or in another language, please contact customer support on 01225 715 715.

Me kërkesë, ky dokument gjendet edhe në gjuhën shqipe.

هذه الوثيقة متاحة باللغة العربية عند الطلب.

本文件可以應要求，製作成中文(繁體字)版本。

Ce document est disponible en français sur simple demande.

अनुरोध पर यह दस्तावेज़ हिन्दी में भी उपलब्ध है

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany w języku polskim.

Este documento encontra-se disponível em Português, a pedido.

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

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Selwood
Housing

Selwood Housing Society Limited
Bryer Ash Business Park, Bradford Road,
Trowbridge, Wiltshire BA14 8RT

T. 01225 715 715

E. info@selwoodhousing.com

selwoodhousing.com