

Financial Detox Webinar – December 2022 – Transcript

Good morning, everyone. Hopefully we can all see the presentation on your screen and understand my my Yorkshire accent.

My name is Andrew Scaife and I work for Mercer Marsh Benefits, which is a large global employee benefits and risk consultancy firm.

And my role is as a workplace educator, the good news I'm not here to try to tell you anything today.

I'm here to go through a financial detox with you, with the aim of help improve your finances, get some more money in your pocket, and improve your overall financial wellbeing during this cost of living crisis we currently are going through.

Probably take about an hour today depending on how many questions you have.

Ask me as many questions as you want. There's no such thing as a stupid question.

If I could just ask you to all go mute, please, to avoid any background noise. Looks like you all are.

So thanks for that. Then if you have a question, take yourself off mute. Let me know and I will help you out.

Alternatively, if you want to put your questions in the chat box as I go along, I'll make sure I keep keep an eye out for them.

A copy of the presentation and a recording as well

will go round to everyone because I'm going to cover quite a lot of information today.

So it might be a case if you just want to go through any particular area related to your own finances, maybe in your own time and look back on back on that.

So that will go round to you later today. Okay.

So just a quick caveat before we get stuck in is I'm not here to give you individual financial advice during this presentation. What does that mean for you?

Means I'm here to give you lots of information, guidance, give you some examples answer your questions.

So when we finish today, you're confident of what to do next.

Now in terms of the agenda today, we'll first look at why your well-being and financial health is important to you and

your employer and what financially fit and financially well actually looks like.

We'll look at the the bedrock of good financial planning, budgeting and cashflow management.

How, you know, having control over the day to day, that's vital if you're going to keep your finances in order, that's for sure.

Followed by going through the financial detox, looking at things like managing debts

well, maximising your income and looking at particular areas you might be able to cut back and

actually save money when it comes to your discretionary and your essential expenditures.

Well, last but not least, we'll finish with the next steps and open it up for any questions.

But like I said, just ask me as many questions as you want, as we as we go along.

So let's start with your well-being and financial health.

So why has your employer decided to put this presentation on today?

This workshop essentially to help you out because your financial wellbeing is important to them, as this can have a knock on effect in all areas of wellbeing, including your mental, physical and even social wellbeing as well.

Most of us know what it's like. If we worry about money at some point in our life, we can feel anxious.

This can have an impact on things like how we sleep,

which over even a short period of time could certainly have a knock on effect on our mental health, that's for sure.

And then even our physical health, if it goes on for a period of time.

And at the end of the day, your employer having a happy and healthy workforce

it's good for them and it's good for you. Hence the reason for today's presentation.

So what does financially fit, financially well, actually look like? So this can be split down into four different pillars.

Number one is control over the day to day. So this is about knowing what you've got coming in, going out and what you've got left over.

If you're overspending, you know, cutting back where you can,

managing your debts well and ensuring you've got some money left over for your other other wants and needs. Pillar two, prepared for the unexpected.

You know, having that ability to absorb a financial shock, I think with what's happened in the world, you know,

with Covid over the last couple of years and what's happening right now with this cost of living crisis really brings this home.

So it's about having that emergency fund, you know, a rainy day fund to help you cope when the inevitable financial shock comes along one day.

Because it is unlikely that we are all going to get through our entire life without a bit of a stumbling block, you know, some kind of worries about money at some point.

So being prepared for that is certainly important. And it's also about having the right protection in place too,

whether it's the usual, car insurance, home insurance, contents insurance, or protection if something more serious happens, like if you were off work with a critical illness or if you died or something like that. So things like, you know, life insurance, critical illness, income protection as well. So having the right cover in place, sufficient cover in place is important just to ensure, you know, you and your family are prepared for the unexpected if something does happen. Number three is a freedom to make choice in life. This is about having the money to enable us to enjoy life, like going out with our friends, going on holiday, whatever you like doing in your leisure time. And it's also about having the spare money and the knowledge about how to best put that money to work, for your end goals, whatever future plans you might have as well. And then number four - on track for the future you want. This is about continuing to monitor and ensure you're on track for the future. Life throws at us all kinds of obstacles that can knock us off track. And pillar four is about reacting to show you can still achieve your goals and your plans for the future, and reviewing them on a regular basis as well because, you know, what it's like as you get older, our priorities, what matters to us now what we want to achieve in the future can certainly develop, that's for sure and can massively change, so just reacting to them, making sure what plans, savings you've got for the future for your future ambitions, and change accordingly is very important. So these are the the bedrock of good financial planning, what's classed as financially well, financially fit. And we'll look in more detail at some of these areas today. OK. Let's start by looking at budgeting and cash flow. Pillar one - control over the day to day, a crucial part and starting point of maintaining good financial wellbeing, getting your finances in order. Now, budgeting, this is a fairly simple process. Looking at where your monthly spend goes, I imagine a lot of you do this already. So, sorry if I'm stating the obvious. However, if you're not,

this is definitely an essential part and starting point to getting your finances in order. So you start by working out your income for the month.

Pretty much most of us know what we earn, what drops in the bank each month.

Now the next bit can be a little trickier.

I speak to a lot of people who know exactly what they've got coming in each month, and that is certainly all gone at the end.

They're just not too sure where it went in between.

So finding out where your money goes is crucial, and getting it down on paper can really open your eyes to what you're spending on.

So visibility really helps out here when it comes to your spending.

Now, there are lots of apps available to keep track of your finances nowadays.

Or you might be old school and use spreadsheet or even a notepad.

It's about what works best for you,

but seeing where we are individually can help us get a better feel for our overall situation, where our money's going,

our spending habits, we might have picked up some bad habits over the years and actually seeing them on paper can really bring it to life,

and you'll think, do you know what, I need to address that now.

A couple of tools to help with this process in the middle there, the Money Helper website offers a great budget planner that you can use for free,

and there's lots of hints and tips on what to do next. Certainly worth exploring. Now that website, the Money Helper website, is in itself is worth exploring.

It's been put together by the government to help with all areas of finances.

It covers things like budgeting, like I just touched on now, pensions, savings,

debts, mortgages, money troubles, anything you can think of to do with finances.

You don't need to sign up for it, it's worth just Googling Money Helper website and then save it to your favourites, because it's a fabulous website and all the

articles are in really easy to understand terms, not too long-winded,

nice to the point and a really useful resource when it comes to anything,

money that's for sure. Alternatively,

you might prefer an app on your phone and there's certainly lots available you're almost spoilt for choice if you

just Google budgeting apps and have a read about each one and pick the one that suits your needs and goals the best.

Which Money has got a good budgeting app article where

it talks about, I think it's about five or six different budgeting apps, talks about the costs,

if there's any kind of monthly cost, what it can do for you, and then you can make a decision.

So if you do like the idea of using an app to track your spending, having a look online at the different apps available is certainly worthwhile.

And most of these apps, they're great because you can use them for tracking your spending, you can set budgets,

you can set savings goals and some also give you nudges on articles you might want to read based on your spending habits too,

almost like a bit of a money coach.

And, the beauty about these apps is you can connect them to your bank account, so it pulls across all your transactions automatically.

Now I will just say the first time you do it, you set it up, connect it to your bank account,

it pulls across all the transactions. When it comes to, you know, your big retailers, like your Asda, your Aldi, it knows,

that's for the the monthly shopping, for instance, groceries.

But some small retailers, it might not know which category to put it in.

So that first time it's a case of saying, right, I want it in this category.

And then at least going forward, it knows which categories to go in. So it might take you 15 minutes when you first set it up,

but it's certainly worth the time because once you understand, you know your outgoings, you can start,

seeing exactly where your money's going each month, where you're potentially overspending,

maybe picked up some bad habits, you can look to address them as soon as soon as possible.

So if you don't track your spending, great starting point that's for sure.

So once you know where your money is going each month, what's the next step, trying to cut back?

And I'm going to talk about various areas we can look at cutting back today.

However, a really good resource to use going forward if you don't already, the MoneySavingExpert website. You've probably all heard of Martin Lewis, he's

all over the the media at the moment with this cost of living crisis that we're going through so if you're not signed up for their free weekly email

that you can get through, just pop over to MoneySavingExpert.

You can put in your email address there and then you'll get that

weekly email in your inbox. Maybe put 10 minutes aside for a cup of tea, cup of coffee and go through that and it'll talk about every area.

You can get the best deals,

when it comes to things like interest on savings, best mortgages, credit cards, phone deals, also keeps you up to date with

everything that's going on with the cost of living crisis, any help we can get from the government, for instance, like they've rolled out when it comes to the energy prices.

So if you're not signed up for the MoneySavingExpert email, I would recommend that. Another one I actually receive is Which Money.

They do a good weekly email as well.

So if you get those two, you can't really go wrong when finding the best deals and keeping up to speed with all things finances.

Like I said, when I get onto the detox part of the presentation, I'll talk more about some particular areas you can cut back and save some money.

Now, when it comes to your monthly cash flow, I will tell you what really works,

when it comes to seeing where you are with things, what you've got left over. Now I'll tell you how I do it.

This is an example. I've got three bank accounts. I've got my current account, which my salary gets paid into each month,

and I've got my bills account for all my monthly direct debits, my mortgage, gas and electricity, phone.

All the usual. Then I've got a third account for my savings, my rainy day fund,

everything I'm saving up for. And when I get paid on the 27th of the month, the salary goes into my main bank account.

And then I've got two standing orders that come out automatically so I don't need to mess about with it.

The first one goes into my bills account, so I know all my monthly bills, my mortgage, all the usual, are totally covered.

So I don't need, to when I look at my main bank account, think what have I got left to come out?

I don't need to worry about that because it's all covered in my bills account.

And then the second standing order that comes out, goes into my savings account, for everything I'm saving for at the moment,

whether it's topping up my emergency fund, saving up for Christmas, saving for next year's holiday.

So it all happens automatically. And then what I've got left in my main bank account is basically for my monthly spend.

So if I'm ever thinking, should I do this, I want to buy this, I can just have a look, see how much I've got left, and then I can decide, yes I can,

or maybe this time I can't do it. And when it comes to tracking, keeping yourself on top of

your monthly spending, knowing what you've got left, helping to stop you from overspending,

it works a treat. And the beauty about setting this up now, it's because most things can be done online,

it's not like you have to go down to a branch

to get this set up. You can just go onto your internet banking or the app on your phone, open up some other accounts, set up some standing orders.

So it's certainly worth your while doing it all.

Also, I'll just mention when it comes to savings account, although one works well for me, you might want three or four savings accounts,

You might have individual goals, one might be an emergency fund, you know that you try paying a little bit extra in each month.

Next one might be for next year's holiday, Christmas, whatever savings goals you've got,

you can open up as many savings accounts as you want and set up the relevant standing orders.

So if you're not stashing your cash, this is potentially a good idea that you could implement into your daily routine.

And like I said, it does work a treat when it comes to seeing what money you've got left over for the month and it can help

reduce your chance of overspending that's for sure.

Before we get on to the detox part, I will just touch on the importance of being prepared for the unexpected,

you know that pillar two of good financial wellbeing - preparing for the unexpected just in case something happens.

Now when it comes to that, you know, that rainy day fund,

emergency fund, the rule of thumb is aim to have about 3 to 6 months of your essential bills saved up just

in case something happens. Now I appreciate we're going through a cost of living crisis, so right now

building up an emergency fund if you don't have one can be quite tricky.

However, there's a few good apps available which can help with the process and just do it on a gradual basis,

get the ball rolling. One is the Moneybox app, and basically something called roundups. Now I do know Halifax bank do this,

and NatWest do this as well. I think Monzo, Moneybox that I mentioned.

Essentially, let's say you go to the shop, let's say you get a few items, spend £1.80.

What it does, is it tops that £1.80 up to £2 and that 20 pence, it automatically transfers into a savings account.

So if you do struggle to save, if you don't have an emergency fund or you've got an emergency fund and you want to try, to top it up a bit,

maybe taking advantage of this roundup facility could be a useful tool to achieve that.

You never know, over a year, couple of years, all these little roundups can certainly add up,

and you could have built up a nice little emergency fund over that period of time.

So if you do struggle to save that could be a good thing to implement.

I know Chase Bank at the moment, they do roundups and when it comes to the savings account they put your money in, the interest rate on that is 5% at the moment.

So it's a good interest rate that's for sure.

Also when it comes to being prepared for unexpected, you know, having the right protection in place is important.

You know, I touched on, you know, car insurance, home insurance contents insurance, you know, the usual that most of us have,

but having the right protection in place as well, just in case something big and more serious happens.

Now, I know this is a morbid exercise, so you might want a glass of wine or maybe, a bottle of beer when you do this.

But actually having a sit down and thinking about what could potentially go wrong in life and whether you've got sufficient cover,

you're protected for that, just in case something does happen is a worthwhile exercise.

Also having a look to see if you've got duplicate cover, for instance, because let's say through your employer, you get some kind of,

death in service, critical illness, income protection or something like that,

and you're paying for it privately and it's almost like excess cover that you don't need.

You could potentially look at maybe, cancelling that cover

that you pay for privately - free up some money if you've got sufficient through work.

But one thing to just be aware of is, of course, if you leave work, that cover ceases and then you would have to take out new cover,

which can be a bit more expensive if you take it out later in life and depending if you've had any health issues.

But it's something you could look at. And certainly when it comes to reviewing your protection, seeing what you get through work, what you've got,

private, if it's sufficient and that's obviously a good thing, if you've got any kind of shortfall,

it might be a case of looking to take out some more cover just in case,

some kind of major event happens because being prepared for the unexpected,

although we like to say, you know it won't happen to me, these kind of things happen to other people,

you never know, it could happen to us. So, being prepared is certainly important that's for sure.

OK. Let's get on to the financial detox, the nitty gritty of the presentation.

So let's start by looking at maximising your income. Is there any way you can get more money coming in without necessarily earning any more?

So the first thing to check is your tax code.

Now, the default tax code that most people are on is 1257L.

So your personal allowance for most people is £12,570.

So we've just dropped the zero off there, 1257L. Now what we tend to do is when it comes to the monthly payment comes into our,

into our bank, if it looks about right, you think, I'm sure everything's right.

We don't really look at our payslip, but it's amazing how many people are on the wrong tax code.

Getting that rectified as soon as possible is certainly worthwhile doing because it could be due some tax back, or on the flip side,

it might be a case of you're on the wrong tax code,

you haven't been paying enough tax and getting that sorted as soon as possible before it can compound is certainly worth doing.

So open your payslip or I say open it

that's a bit old school, have a look online nowadays because most things are online and if your tax code isn't 1257L and you're not sure why

you'd be on a different tax code...just giving HMRC a quick call and asking them is certainly worthwhile.

It might be case of you're on the wrong tax code get that corrected, you might be due a refund, or on the flipside,

if you're underpaying paying tax, getting that sorted as quickly as possible is certainly a good idea.

Are you claiming any tax relief, where eligible? This is on things like charity donations, pension contributions.

Now, if you're a high rate taxpayer, when it comes to charity donations, you get the 20% tax relief automatically.

However, you're entitled to claim back another 20% because you pay 40% tax for instance, but it doesn't happen automatically, so you need to actually claim that from HMRC.

Same when it comes to pension contributions, now, when it comes to your workplace pension,

I don't have the details of it. But if you're a higher rate tax payer and you're paying your contributions by salary exchange, salary sacrifice,

another term for the same thing, you do get the full tax relief through payroll, so you don't need to worry about claiming back that higher rate tax relief.

However, if you're a higher rate taxpayer and paying into a pension privately on the side that you've set up from your bank account,

you would only get that 20% tax relief automatically and you would be able to claim back the other 20%.

The good news is, if you've gone a period of time where you've never claimed it back and you just realise you can do this,

the good news is you can go back four previous tax years as well. I actually told my neighbour about this and I think he got back about £1,500 and he didn't even buy me a beer, which was a bit tight that's for sure but I won't start ranting.

But yeah, if you're a higher rate taxpayer paying into a pension privately on the side, paying any kind of charity donation, make sure you claim back that higher rate tax relief.

Can you make use of the marriage allowance?

Now, if you're married or in a civil partnership, you might be able to claim this.

Now, when it comes to the eligibility, one of you has to be a non-taxpayer and the other has to be a basic rate taxpayer.

What you're allowed to do is essentially borrow 10% of the non-taxpayer's personal allowance for yourself, which is good for a saving of £250 per year.

And the good news is you can go back the four previous tax year as well.

So if you have been eligible for this married for four, five years, for instance, or more,

and one of you is a non-taxpayer, the other is a basic rate taxpayer, you can actually claim back the previous four years as well.

So you could be due £1,250, if eligible. If you are eligible, if you just go to the GOV.UK website, there's a search box on there, you can just put in marriage allowance, you can actually apply for it online.

So it's quick and easy to do, so taking advantage of any kind of help that's available, you know, any kind of allowances is certainly worth doing.

Are you entitled to any state benefits now, there's something like £20 billion still unclaimed in benefits because if we're working,

we kind of assume, you know what, I'm working, I'm probably not entitled to anything.

However, that might not be the case. So having to look at a benefits calculator, is worthwhile doing. There's one on the GOV.UK website.

There's another good one I've tried out just because I talk about in this presentation on the Money Saving Expert website.

So if you just go to Moneysavingexpert, put in 'benefits checker', you put details of yourself, partners if you've got one,

children, any childcare costs you might have, housing costs, etc. And it will actually say if you're due any kind of benefits.

And like I said, £20 billion also go unclaimed. So just putting five, 10 minutes aside, just to check, certainly worth doing because you never know,

there might be some help you can get in some area when it comes to benefits.

And last but not least, have you got any assets that could generate an income too? Now with interest rates going up for the first time in about 12,

13 years, getting some kind of, you know, passive income on some cash savings is actually possible.

So actually, maybe taking some of that to just supplement your income could be could be useful during this cost of living crisis.

Also, if you've got any assets like, you know, investments, maybe a stocks and shares ISA, if you need some extra money, maybe you could start taking some income from that.

And the beauty about that stocks and shares ISA is any income you take from it is tax free as well.

So maximising your income these are some ideas - check your tax code. Are you getting all that tax relief?

Where eligible can you claim the marriage allowance, and are you entitled to any state benefits?

So just checking these areas is certainly worth doing. Now, when it comes to cash, money in the bank,

which is certainly a hot topic right now with interest rates going up.

So, you know, taking advantage of any offers available when it comes to high interest rates,

bribes to actually change your bank, for instance,

it's something you could do. Now, when it comes to switching your current account,

lots of offers available at the moment.

HSBC, they offer to £200, so if you switch your banking to them, they will give you £200 bonus for for doing that.

Now, it's not like back in the day when you switch bank account, you have to change all the direct debits yourself, standing orders...

which can take some time. With the current account switching service

the bank does it all for you and they get those all switched over within about seven days on average.

So it could be a case of, if you're not loyalty bankers,

nowadays you're not rewarded for loyalty if you switch your current account to HSBC,

I think I think Nationwide they might be doing £200 as well and then there's First Direct, they're £175.

They're infamous for the great customer service. If you do need some help.

So maybe switch your bank account, get that bonus, couple of hundred pounds in your pocket.

Could be worth doing it. I've just seen in the comments that NatWest are doing this, so Natwest must be doing an offer.

Now when it comes to earning more interest on your savings, last 12, 13 years since the credit crunch,

interest rates have been at rock bottom, you know, just above just above zero.

So getting any kind of return on your cash savings has been painful,

it's been difficult.

Good news now is interest rates are going up, which does mean for once, people with savings could actually get a better return.

So, again, you're not really rewarded for loyalty. So have a look on those comparison sites.

You know,

have a look at that Martin Lewis email he sends through every week because it's always got on that email the best deals when it comes to savings.

I've noticed a few people in the comments have mentioned HSBC currently offer 7% on a savings account locked in for one year,

up to £300 per month you can pay in. So having a look at these offers and moving your money is certainly worth,

worth doing because there's a lot more competition now and there's a lot better rates available.

So if you've been sitting on cash for a long time, earning very little, now's the time to actually get a return on it.

And so reviewing your savings is well worth doing. Also some government help available when it comes to saving.

Now, if you or your partner or anyone you know to be fair receives any kind of, benefits, universal credit, for example,

there's a help to save scheme which you can set up with the government and basically you can save £50 per month

and after two years, they give you a 50% bonus on the highest balance you have over that two year period.

So if you are eligible for that, taking advantage of that, that 50% bonus certainly can be a lot more than you'd get from a savings account.

So that could be a good option.

Like I said, probably not suitable for most, but for people on a low income receiving any kind of benefits, you are likely to be eligible for that.

Other government saving schemes for first time buyers, if you've never owned a property, you, your partner,

for instance, if you have one, you're try to save up that deposit, which can be very difficult, you know, getting that five,

10% deposit together to actually potentially get on the property ladder, taking advantage of things like government

schemes like lifetime ISAs works really well. When it comes to a lifetime ISA,

you can pay basically £4000 in a tax year and it gets topped up by £1000 to £5000.

So let's say for instance, you've got £8000 in savings.

You're currently renting, bills are going up. You're just in a position where you can't afford to pay more into that savings account.

What you could do is open a lifetime ISA, pay in £4000, that's going to get topped up to £5000. Then next tax year, 6th of April next year,

so not long away, pay in your other £4000 and you're going to get that other £1,000 bonus.

So you've suddenly turned £8000 into £10,000.

An extra 2000 might get you to that level of deposit you need so you can actually start looking to get on the property ladder.

So taking advantage of any government schemes available, certainly worth doing,

that's for sure. Now cash savings, I will just say they are protected by the financial services compensation scheme.

Now the limit is 85,000.

So let's say you were lucky enough, I wish, to have more than 85,000 in savings and that the bank went bust. 15,000, above, for instance, if

you had 100 grand, you would lose and you'd only get the 85,000.

So if you are in a fortunate position, over 100,000 in savings, splitting them between different banks, so you've got a protection with each bank is worth doing. One thing just to be aware of is make sure you

don't fall under the same umbrella. For instance they don't both fall under the Lloyds Banking Group because you'd only get one lot of compensation.

Now what is very relevant, especially this year, is what kind of product you save your money in.

Because previously, back in the day, I sound old don't I?

Back in the day, most people liked to put their savings in cash ISAs because any interest you received was tax free.

Then the government brought out something called a personal savings allowance,

which was basically interest you could receive in a bank account, a savings account, a certain amount you can get each tax year tax free.

Now, for a basic rate, taxpayer is £1,000. For a higher rate

taxpayer, it's £500. Previously, the last 12 or 13 years because interest rates were so low,

you would have to have had a really good sum of money in savings for you to receive interest above those allowances.

So for a lot of people, it was almost irrelevant where they put the money because that savings allowance would cover.

However, because interest rates have gone up a lot this year, likely to go up again in December, probably a couple more times in the first quarter of next year,

you don't need as much in savings for that interest when you receive it to go above that personal savings

allowance and be liable to tax. So it might be worth, when you are reviewing your savings, trying to get the best rates,

just do a quick calculation what interest you're likely to get in a tax year and if it's likely to go above that thousand pounds,

if you're basically a taxpayer £500, if you're a higher rate taxpayer,

maybe looking at utilising cash ISAs,

you can pay £20,000 into a cash ISA every tax year, just to make sure it's interest free and then maybe having some money in a savings account.

But when it comes to the interest, as long as you keep below that thousand pounds, for instance, you're not going to have any tax to pay.

So that is another consideration. And just to think about when it comes to your savings nowadays, because interest rates have gone up.

Okay. That's making the most of your cash. What about property?

Is there any way you can generate an income? There is. Now, some of these probably aren't suitable for most people, but I will just touch on them.

Rent-a-room scheme. You know, if you've got space, you're happy renting a room out.

You can get £7500 per year in rent and it's tax free.

Other things you can do nowadays, you can rent your parking space out.

Now let's say you live near an airport or city centre. If you're happy for people to park in your in your drive instead of paying costly

airport parking

or city centre parking, you can put your details on a website and they essentially pay you and book in to park on your on your drive.

You can rent out now storage space, camping space. Would you want people camping in your garden, having a mini festival?

Maybe not, especially if they want to use your facilities as well,

but it just shows nowadays there's all sorts you can do when it comes to getting some more money coming in.

You can even look after people's pets and get paid for that. I know my neighbour does this every Friday, look after someone's pet,

they get paid for it and her and the kids take it out and have a nice walk and things like that.

So again, probably not suitable for most of you, but there are some other ways you can generate some income from your property.

Now when it comes things like mortgage, rent payments,

people's generally biggest bill and certainly monthly expense, certainly going up or likely to go in the near future. When it comes to rent,

if you go to the [Moneysavingexpert](#) website and just put 50 tips for renters, there's a really good article.

Have a look over that, see if there's any way you can save money in that respect.

When it comes to mortgages, hot topic right now. Reason for this, obviously interest rates going up.

A lot of people are fixed in really low interest rate deals that they secured when interest rates were a lot lower than they are now.

So when they come to an end in the near future, the coming years, interest rates are likely to be a lot higher, which means your monthly payments are going to jump up.

What some people are doing is actually locking in new rates now.

So let's say you're still within a deal that doesn't end for, let's say, about six months.

Some lenders will let you within six months lock in a new deal now, in advance.

Some lenders it's three months, some four. It might be worth if you're worried about interest rates going up and those mortgage rates going up in the future,

and you want to lock them in now if your lender will allow that, it might be case of

speaking to them and you could look at what deals they have got and maybe lock one in now.

Also, when it comes to mortgages now, quite a fast moving environment, that's for sure.

With everything that's been going on from from when that mini-Budget happened and it sent the mortgage market into a bit of a turmoil,

this could be one of those times where you benefit from, you know,

speaking to a mortgage adviser, If you're not comfortable doing it yourself right now because of the uncertainty,

the ups and downs maybe, actually speaking to a mortgage adviser.

They do this day in, day out, they'll know which lenders are lending,

where the best deals are, what the affordability criteria are, how likely you are to be accepted.

And so maybe getting some advice from a mortgage adviser could be a good idea if you're just worried about doing it yourself.

But thinking about potentially locking a deal early could be worth exploring that's for sure.

Now on that property slide, you see things like, renting out a room, car parking space, looking after people's pets.

Probably not suitable for most. However, something that is probably suitable for most of us is selling things we don't use.

Now we've all got clothes we don't use, generally. Old phones, DVDs, CDs, anything you can think of.

Even if you think it's junk, someone else will probably buy that.

So it might be worth when we have a cold, rainy day, which I'm sure we will, being in the UK, that's for sure, having a clear-out, going through your wardrobe, your cupboard, your drawers, see what you've got that you can sell, certainly worthwhile doing.

You might be old school and think, do you know what I'm going to do a car boot sale, get up Saturday, Sunday morning in the cold and dark

so you get set up and get everything sold. Or, nowadays you can sell most things online, whether it's your eBay, Gumtree or just your local Facebook selling sites, you know, actually seeing what you've got that you can sell, get rid of it, clear out some space and you could get, 1,2, £300 in your pocket doing that, which could be just perfect timing, you know, before Christmas. So that could be a good idea because most of us have stuff we don't use that we can get rid of, that's for sure. What about any cost of living government help? A lot's been going on with one, you know, things coming out, then U-turns cancelled, replaced with things. Just to quickly go through what you should have received. Now, you should have all, if you're in council tax band A to D, you should have all received £150 rebate, that you don't need to pay back. Happened early in the year. Might be worth just checking your bank statement, see if you've received that. The Energy Bill Support Scheme. This originally was going to be about £200 credit that we were going to get in October and then we had to pay it back over a number of years. That was scrapped and they replaced it with a £400 credit that we don't need to pay back now. Now they've spread it over six months. So you should on your energy statement, you should get credit of 66, £67. You should have received your first one in October. You should have got your second one in November and probably maybe December might have been paid as well. If you're not too sure, log in to your energy supplier and see if you those credits have been put on your bill because everyone will be getting them, doesn't matter what you earn. Everyone will get that credit, so just check if you haven't, give your a supplier a call and see why you haven't received them, you're entitled something like £400. That's certainly some good help through this through this winter, that's for sure. Energy prices, they were capped for two years. You've probably heard that figure in the media. Energy prices being capped at £2500 for the next two years. One thing to be aware of is that people have misunderstood that. Some people have thought, okay, my energy bills can't be more than £2,500 for the year. I'll just put on my heating, my lights on. No, that's not the case.

The energy unit price is being capped, and the 2500 figure refers to typical usage, average usage.

So if you use more than average, your bill can be more than £2,500.

If you use less than average bill can be below that.

So just be aware of that because that has caught a few people out, because they just assumed bills can't be more than £2500.

Now that was originally going to be for two years.

Then it got changed to six months it's going to run to the end of March and then a new cap comes into place.

I think it's 3000. Yeah. It is £3000.

That would be what they spoke about. Yeah. Now, it's going to be an increase.

Not sure if they're going to come out with any kind of energy bills support scheme.

You know that £400 we're getting at the moment spread over six months whether they're going to come out with something new to help.

It's a case of watch this space,

so it will be all over the media as soon as any details of that has been released, so something to watch out for, that's for sure.

Very much a developing area to keep on keep on top of when it comes to energy prices.

Cost of living payment. This is if you receive any kind of benefits like universal credit.

Now, I know two payments were made, I think it was £650 divided by two payments this year. You should have received them both by now.

So if you haven't, again, it's a case of, speak to the benefits office and see why you haven't received this.

That's for sure, because it's money you're entitled to. If you want to, of course,

keep up to date with all things all help we've got - go to helpforhouseholds.campaign.gov.uk

You'll see details on there of what's available when it comes to any kind of help for yourself or let's say family members,

parents for instance, you know, if they're elderly, see if there's any help they can get.

Okay, so that's looking at maximising your income, getting any more from your cash savings, getting any kind of help from the government, important areas to look at for sure.

What about managing debts? Now most of us have debt. So managing them well, not letting them go control,

trying to minimise the interest you pay on them where you can is certainly important. Now when it comes to debts, there

are good debts and bad debts. Now you may think Andrew is there really such a thing as a good debt?

However you could look at your mortgage as a good debt because it allows you to, get on the property ladder, when it's fully paid off,

you're going to own that asset outright and it's likely to have gone up in value as well.

So that could be classed as a good debt. Some people say student loans are good debt as well, especially if it gives you the earnings potentials to to earn more going going forward.

Bad debts are things like your high interest credit cards,

your payday loans, the kind of debt you want to try and avoid or minimise as best you can

if you if you've got them. Now, I will just say if you are struggling with debts, worried,

the key thing is don't bury your head in the sand. You know, lenders now they've got a duty of care to help you out,

listen to your circumstances,

and because of this cost of living crisis, lenders now are putting facilities in place to help people, whether it's payment holidays,

extending terms, things like freezing interest, for instance, things like that.

So if you are struggling, get on the phone to your lenders, explain what you're going through.

They're not there to judge you, they're there to help you. And they might be able to come up with an affordable solution to help you out.

Now, if you are really struggling, you know, it's really you stressing out,

you just don't know where to turn. You could speak to a debt charity. Now, Stepchange,

I know people who have used Stepchange debt charity - really good.

It's a free service, a charity and you can have an initial chat with them, talk about your situation, your debts,

outstanding balance, monthly payments, what income you've got coming in and they'll talk about different solutions around that.

It might be setting up an IDA, a debt management plan,

and the beauty about these debt charities as, well,

if they can apply for something called a breathing space with your lenders where you get a period of 60 days,

where they can't contact you, hound you for payment, things like that, add any fees onto your debts.

It just gives you a bit time, a bit of a breathing space to get a plan together either by yourself or with Stepchange.

If you are worried about debts, speak to your lenders or speak to Stepchange if you want some help with the process of getting it sorted.

Now, if you're not massively struggling with debts, but you want to try and get a plan together, get them paid off as soon as possible.

Couple of ways to do this. The first thing to do is try and minimise that interest.

So let's say you've got credit cards. Credit cards they're typically quite high interest if you just pay the minimum payments,

most of that minimum payment's going to cover the interest and then a little bit is going to be paid off your outstanding balance.

So the first thing you could look to do is balance transfer offers,

move your money and then at least you've got no interest added on and every monthly payment you make is coming off the balance.

Sainsbury's bank at the moment, that's the best offer out there,

the last time I looked, it's 34 months interest free and the fee to do it is between 3 and 4%.

So what you could do is apply for that credit card,

if you're accepted for it, move any credit cards you've got on there and it might be case you've got 34 months to pay them off.

You could just set up a direct debit, split it up over 34 months knowing you're not paying any interest and that will be fully paid off after 34 months.

Just make sure you cancel your old credit card,

just so you're not tempted to use it again, which can really potentially compound the problem.

So trying to minimise the interest of any debts as a starting point,

this is a good way to go. And then it's a case of getting a plan together to to pay them off.

A couple of ways to do this: the avalanche method and the snowball method. We'll start with the avalanche method.

Now, this is the most cost effective way and the quickest way to pay off your debts.

So how you do this is you get yourself a piece of paper, excel spreadsheet, you know,

notes on your phone and make a list of your debts from the highest interest rate,

so just ignore outstanding balance, your highest interest rate debt,

down to your lowest your smallest interest rate debt. Then every month what you do is you make the minimum payment on your low interest

rate debts and then pay as much as you can afford off that high interest rate debt. Try to get that paid off as soon as possible,

which is really going to minimise the effect of that interest.

So this is the most cost effective way of getting your debts paying off as soon as possible.

Now, another way to do it, not as cost effective, but for some people it works really well,

it gives them momentum, gives them some quick wins, feel good,

so it works well for them, is the snowball method.

So when it comes to your debts this time, you list them from the smallest outstanding balance so totally ignore interest rates.

This time, smallest amount owed, to the largest amount owed.

Then you focus on just paying the minimum monthly payment off the big debts you've got and focus on paying as much as you can

afford off the small interest rate. And the aim of the game is to basically get that debt fully paid off,

then move down onto the next one on your list. You get that paid off, cross it off onto the next one, and that can build up some momentum.

People feel good, right that's another debt paid off. You know what it's like with lists anyway,

if you've got a list of things you need to do crossing them off, it feels quite satisfying, well it does for me anyway,

feels quite satisfying. And if you've got a list of debts and you starting to cross them off, that certainly is

a good feeling. So this method, although not as cost effective when it comes to saving on the interest side of things,

it can really help people when it comes to getting some momentum, getting that feel good factor as such.

What about food. So this is a big one, especially depending on the size of your family as well.

Do you set food budget? Let's say you never set a food budget.

You just go to the supermarket, buy what you fancy for the week, for instance, you might have no idea what you're spending.

So going back to the very beginning of this presentation, tracking your, spending,

seeing how much you're spending, for instance, on your monthly food shop, it might be a case of you spend £450 each.

You know what? Let's set a budget. I want to spend £400 this month, so just knock £50 off it.

And it might be case if you do your shopping, maybe online, you can take your time, look for what's on offer,

think about meal plans and things like that, and actually try to stick to a budget that could be a good starting point.

Also where and when you shop is important. If you're getting all your items from your Waitrose or your M&S,

then you're likely to pay a lot more than if you get it from a more budget supermarket like your Lidl and your Aldi.

So switching shops totally could work or it might be a case of a few items, luxury items, that you can't go without,

still buy them from let's say Waitrose, but the majority of your shop, day to day essential items, you get from a Lidl.

This could be a way to save money. Also when you shop: generally speaking, if you go later in the evening anything that's due to

get past its sell by date, for instance, in the next next day or two, sometimes they're on offer.

It could be a case of you whip up some bargains, stick them in your freezer to use later.

Also, you've probably all heard of this, don't shop hungry.

You know what it's like, you can go in the best intentions just to pick up a few bits,

but if you go into the supermarket hungry, walk down that treat aisle, you're going to be reaching for that cheesecake or whatever

treat you like. So avoiding shopping hungry. It's good for the bank balance and it's good for our waistlines as well,

that's that's for sure. Downshift challenge.

This is a good one. You know, when it comes to things like, for instance, cereals, you've got your branded cereals,

you've got your own brand, and then you've got your value, your premium cereals, for instance.

It might be a case of, do you know what, I'll try the value. If you don't notice the difference, you get the same food for less.

Now, a lot of these cereals, rice, pasta and things they're made in the same factory, they just put different wrapper on them.

So you literally are getting the same food for the less.

And let's say you've got really fussy kids that will only have Kellogg's Coco Pops, for instance.

It might be a case of keep the old Kellogg's box and put the value item in there see if they

notice. It worked with my kids but you can tell I'm a tight Yorkshireman doing that but it works a treat.

Trick them and you get the same food for less, so doing that downshift challenge is does work a treat and you can certainly

save some money on your monthly food shop. Your usual loyalty cards, you've got your Tesco Clubcard points,

Sainsbury's Nectar points, just building these up, collecting any points you can get. Beauty of that nowadays is

you get an app on your phone that you just scan at check out, build up those points.

You could build them up over the year, and then when it comes to Christmas, the big shop, the big expensive shop at Christmas,

maybe convert those points into vouchers, coupons just to reduce the expense wherever you shop,

if there is any kind of loyalty scheme, loyalty cards, make sure you get those points because it can certainly add up over the year.

Reduce your take away spending?

Now I appreciate cold dark nights. Nothing better than sat in front of the TV eating a nice takeaway, that's for sure.

However, if you are spending a lot on takeaways,

and you decide to review your spending and you can see a lot's going to Just Eat

and all the rest for instance.

It might a case of, do you know what I'm going to try to cut back on my takeaway spending. It might be a case of you just use that when offers come through, emails

saying 20% off or 30% off or something like that off Just Eat then you might maybe go for it.

So that could be a way to cut back a bit. And last but not least, grow your own.

You know, I suppose you don't even have to have the knowledge nowadays you can learn most things online,

but if you've got the space, you could grow some of your own produce,

for instance. You're probably not going to be grow enough unless you've got acres and acres of land and you're very up to date on farming.

But let's say you've got a bit of space, it could be a case of you have a look on YouTube.

Have a look at what you do - when you plant the seeds, how to cultivate them best and maybe grow some of your own

produce. It could save a little bit when it comes to your food shop that's for sure.

Okay. Looking at some housing costs, maybe installing a water meter.

Let's say you're not on a water meter, it could be a case of call up your supplier to say

you're thinking about installing a water meter - they'll be able to give you some estimates.

And it might be a case of, you know what, it could be worthwhile going on a water meter

that could be a potential idea. When it comes to things like your home insurance, generally, we get a renewal either in the post or via email and if you don't do anything, it automatically renews. Take some time out,

to check those comparison sites, check the providers, not on comparison sites like Direct Line, for instance, see if you can get a better deal.

And it might be case of, if you can find a better deal, you call up your provider to cancel,

And it might be case and where they say we'll match that, we want to keep your business.

So certainly just don't let them auto-renew, have a look around see if you can get a better

deal. When it comes to council tax, there are online, again on the moneysavingexpert

website, there's a council tax band checker and you can put in details of your home and

it'll say what band it thinks you should be on and let's say you're not on that band,

it could be something you

appeal and then get moved onto the correct banding. Hopefully it's on the correct banding that should be cheaper for you rather than the other way.

So just be just be careful of that. When it comes to your home phone, your broadband, TV services, generally speaking,

they come as one generally, a lot of people are with Virgin ,Sky, for instance. I'm with Virgin, I've got the phone line, broadband, TV.

I called up earlier in the year and said, you know what, I just want to go down to broadband,

what's it going to cost? Just go down to broadband.

And they basically said to me, right Andrew, if you keep the same package, we'll knock you £30 a month off, and it went down to £45 per month.

So even if you're not thinking of leaving or reducing your package, just call up, you know, they want to keep your business.

They're likely to be able to knock something off. You know, even if it's five or £10 a month, the knock off is still 5 to £10,

it's still £5, £10 you've got in your account each month.

So give them a call that's something you could do this weekend, for instance, or later today, give them a call.

You might be able get an instant discount when it comes to your packages in that respect.

Couple of other must haves when it comes to things like your mobile phone, generally speaking, that monthly phone bill, the majority of that payment covers paying for the handset.

So if you're happy with your handset,

you know you don't need a fancy new handset, when your contract comes to an end, just going on to a SIM only deal you can get for about fiver a month now.

You can get unlimited texts, unlimited calls and a good number of gigabytes.

So let's say at the moment your contract, you're paying £30, £40 a month.

The contract comes to an end. Keep your phone if it's fine. Does the job. Go to a SIM only deal for £5, £10 a month. You know, you could save £20, £30, a month just doing that alone.

That's a good saving. When it comes to child care, I certainly don't miss these days because it costs a fortune.

First thing is check if you can get any kind of benefits, towards it.

So those benefits checkers, as I mentioned earlier, have a look at them, see if there's any help you can get when it comes to childcare costs,

If you can, when it comes to benefits, you could take advantage of tax free childcare.

Basically you open an account with the government. For every 80p you pay in it gets topped up to a pound and you can use that to pay your childcare costs.

So taking advantage of that, getting any help that you can when it comes to childcare, is potentially a big help because the childcare costs can be ludicrous at the moment,

that's for sure. Couple of other quick wins, car insurance.

If you look for quotes 20 to 25 days before your renewal, the systems look at you as a sensible person.

You plan ahead, therefore a better driver, and you get cheaper quotes,

believe it or not. Probably not if you've got a claims history, as long as your left arm you probably won't!

But if you don't and you start looking for quotes 25 days out you actually get cheaper quotes.

I've actually got an annual reminder that pops up on my phone saying,

look for a car insurance quotes. Also make sure you check those like Direct Line and comparison sites as well.

Other regular subscriptions, things like, gym fees, for instance. You know what it's like every January.

This is going to be the year when I'm going to get fit and healthy.

We all go sign up for the gym and come March, April, we're like, you know what?

I'm not into this. And if you're not stuck in a contract, you might be paying a monthly gym fee that you don't use.

So getting that cancelled, it's worth certainly worth doing.

Also, just have a look at your bank statement. Any outgoings you've got for any kind of subscriptions, whether it's a monthly subscription,

for a magazine or something like that, if you don't use it cancel it and that can free up some money.

When it comes to cashback credit cards, these are useful. You know, anything you buy on that, you can get some cash back.

Just be aware though, to make it worthwhile,

you need to be paying off the balance in full at the end of the month because if you don't and the interest gets added on,

that's likely to be more than the cashback that you get on the card.

When it comes to cashback websites, discount codes, sign up for them, they're free.

Top Cashback, that's one, if you sign up for them when it comes to anything you're going to buy, maybe have a look through that website, what cashback, what discount voucher you can get and then have a look on the website directly.

And if you're going to get a better deal, some cashback, through the cashback website, purchasing it through that is potentially a good idea as well.

I was talking to someone yesterday actually a screenprinted in comments how much they got in cashback over last three years and it was about £1,700.

So it can certainly certainly add up, that's for sure. So, Topcashback, that's the one off the top of my head.

So having a look at that could be a good idea.

OK, well I'll just take a bit of a pause there. I appreciate I've had to go through quite a lot of information and I haven't really paused for breath.

So hopefully you've picked out some things that you could, basically add to your routine.

And just looking at the next steps before we open it up for questions,

this process I spoke about today, it's not a one off exercise, you know, it's a continuous process.

So start with your budget review. Reviewing your spending every month is probably worthwhile.

Just seeing if you've got any habits creeping back in where you're overspending a particular area that you can,

cut back in. Understanding, your assets, liabilities, talking about liabilities,

this is things like, your debts, for instance, credit cards. Are you coming to an end of the 0% balance transfer offer,

and then you're going to start paying interest on the outstanding balance. So it might be a case of, you know, check your liabilities.

Can you get better deals? And make sure you switch to those to try and minimise that interest on your liabilities.

Maximising your income, checking your tax code, see if you're entitled to anything from the government, getting the best savings rates on your bank accounts, selling anything you don't use, any way to maximise your income.

Always look looking out for that, reviewing it is important. Minimising your expenditure.

This is a big one. So just looking over that moneysavingexpert email every week helps with this, see what the best deals are.

Is there anywhere you could switch, get a better deal, you know, save money when it comes to your monthly spending.

That's that's certainly worthwhile doing on a weekly basis really when that email comes out. And making your money work for you.

This is things like, your investments, your savings for your future goals, for instance, so interest rates on your bank account.

Can you move it? Could you tie the money up for a period of time and get a better interest rate?

Always see what's available. And if you're not tied in, switch your money, take advantage of those better deals.

And it brings you back round to budget. And like I said, it's a continuous process.

But if you haven't done any of this now, I appreciate a lot of you will probably do some of this.

But if you have done none of this, just actually starting could potentially make a big difference.

Some websites for further help. Money Helper website I've mentioned today.

Great resource when it comes to all things finances. Money saving expert,

I've certainly mentioned that enough, that's for sure. Stepchange, if you are struggling with debts, you want some help, there are some good articles on there

you can read, different options available. Also, you can ring up and get an appointment to speak to one of their advisers. And Help for Households,

that's where you can see what government help is available at the moment when it comes to the cost of living crisis.

Okay. That's the end of the presentation. We've got about 3 minutes, so just in time.

So I'll just start by saying thank you very much for listening.

Hopefully you got a few little ideas out of there that you can implement into your routine, to help you during this cost of living crisis.

And I'll just to open it up and see if you've got any particular questions I can help with.

Like I mentioned, a copy of the slides and the recording will go around as well.

So if you do want to dip back into this in your own time, you'll be able to do that.

There's no questions. I will just say thank you very much for listening and I hope you enjoy the rest of your day.