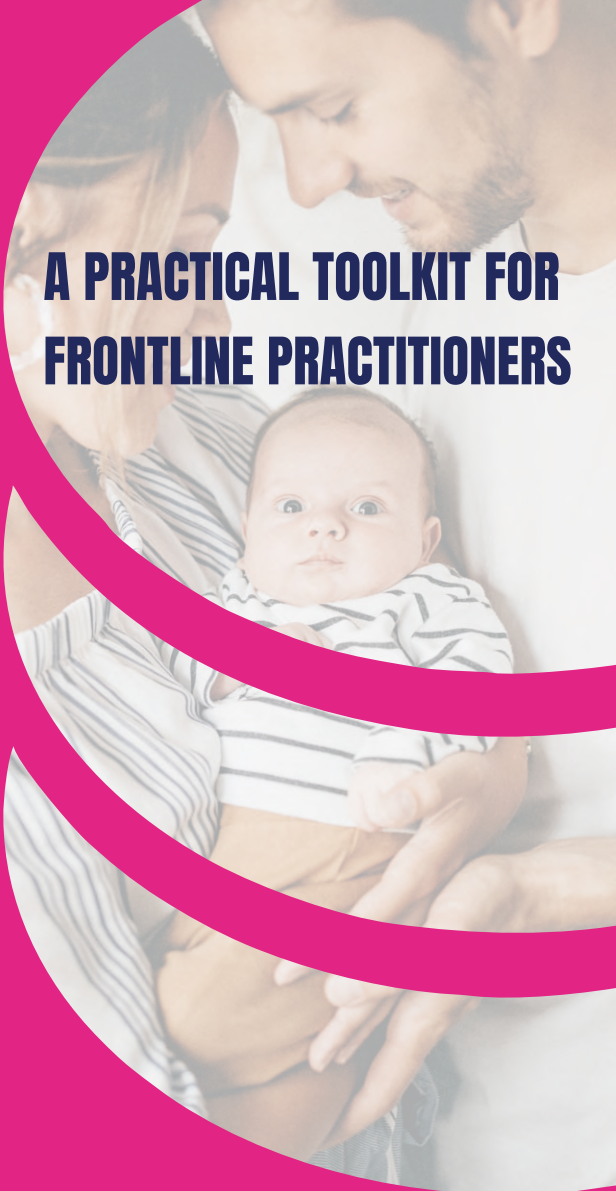




A PRACTICAL TOOLKIT FOR FRONTLINE PRACTITIONERS

BUILDING FINANCIAL RESILIENCE



WHAT IS A CREDIT UNION?



Just Credit Union (Just CU) is an ethical, not-for-profit and member owned financial co-operative.

Unlike banks, credit unions are owned by their members. Members save together, and those savings create a fund from which local people can borrow affordably. When members save with Just CU, their money stays within the local community; helping other members while building stronger communities. When an individual joins Just CU, they get a variety of benefits from their membership:

- **Straightforward saving and manageable loans.**
- **Save as you borrow to build a savings pot.**
- **Weekly/monthly repayments based on affordability.**
- **Member Online Access and App.**
- **Friendly member services team.**
- **Simple online application for all services.**
- **Ethical and safe money management.**
- **Always puts people before profit.**

Building Financial Resilience



WHY THIS TOOL KIT MATTERS

Build stronger financial futures for:

- Housing Officers
- Tenancy Sustainment Officers
- Social Workers
- Care Leaver Teams
- Family Support Workers
- Trade Union Representatives
- Community Organisations
- Welfare & Wellbeing Teams

Many of the people we support face financial pressures that can quickly become crises. An unexpected bill, a broken washing machine, reduced working hours or rising living costs can have a significant impact on someone's wellbeing.

Financial stress affects much more than a person's bank balance. It can contribute to poor mental health, relationship breakdown, housing insecurity and reduced employment opportunities. As a frontline practitioner, you are often the first person to notice when someone is struggling.

This toolkit has been designed to help you recognise the signs of financial vulnerability, have supportive conversations about money and understand how Just CU can help people build long-term financial resilience.

WHAT IS FINANCIAL RESILIENCE?



Financial resilience is the ability to cope with life's financial ups and downs.

People who are financially resilient are more likely to:

- ✓ have emergency savings
- ✓ manage unexpected expenses
- ✓ avoid high-cost borrowing
- ✓ feel confident about money
- ✓ plan for the future

Financial resilience isn't about being wealthy. It's about having the confidence, habits and support to manage money well.

UNDERSTANDING FINANCIAL EXCLUSION

Many people cannot access affordable financial services. This may mean they:

- rely on exploitative borrowing
- have no savings
- struggle to access mainstream credit
- have poor financial confidence
- live from payday to payday

Without support, small financial problems can become long-term financial hardship.

SAVINGS



Regular savings help plan for the future, budget for special purchases and ensure there's an emergency fund when it's needed most.

HOW DO OUR SAVING ACCOUNTS WORK?

There are a range of saving accounts to suit the member. Here's what you need to know:

- Same day access to savings without penalty.
- A £5 balance in the account to keep it open.
- Just CU savings are protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS).
- Savings can be paid by bank, salary or benefits.

As a financial co-operative, it pays an annual dividend* from the profits which is shared amongst its members. Payment depends upon profit for the year.

You can view or signpost referrals to:
www.justcreditunion.org/savings/



*Subject to financial performance

The Poverty Premium



People on the lowest incomes often pay the highest costs. Examples include:

- higher borrowing costs
- prepayment energy tariffs
- expensive household credit
- replacement costs after emergencies

Spotting the Warning Signs

Without savings, even relatively small expenses can create major problems. Helping someone save before a crisis occurs is often the most effective intervention.

Watch for people who:

- regularly borrow money
- cannot replace essential items
- have rent arrears
- avoid opening post
- miss appointments because of money
- frequently change payment arrangements
- mention anxiety about bills
- have no emergency savings

LOANS



Just CU ethical loans offer weekly or monthly repayments based on affordability. Members save as they borrow - when the loan is repaid, they have a savings pot!

HOW DO OUR LOAN ACCOUNTS WORK?

When someone applies for a loan they become a member of Just CU at the same time - so it's quick and easy.

They can apply to borrow from £300 to £15,000, subject to status. There are no hidden charges, arrangement fees or early repayment charges.

Depending on the loan, applicants can calculate their repayments and interest using our loan calculator. Interest is calculated on the reducing balance. They can learn more and apply for a loan using the website. If someone requires additional assistance, they can call 01743 252325 and speak to a member of the team.

You can view or signpost referrals to:
<https://justcreditunion.org/loans/>



STARTING THE CONVERSATION



Money can be difficult to discuss. There are ways to start the conversation with simple questions which may include:

- "How are things financially at the moment?"
- "If an unexpected bill arrived tomorrow, how would you manage?"
- "Do you have any savings to fall back on?"

Always avoid judgement, listen carefully and focus on solutions rather than problems.

WHY SAVING MATTERS

Regular saving helps to build a secure financial future. It's important to emphasise:

- saving isn't about large amounts
- regular small savings build resilience
- even £5 each week can create an emergency fund over time
- many people find saving easier when money leaves their income before it reaches their bank account

Payroll Saving



Payroll deduction is an easy and convenient way to save.

The payment is deducted before the salary reaches the bank account, and so many members say they don't miss the money because they never see it.

Benefits include:

- easy budgeting
- regular saving habits
- reduced temptation to spend
- save as little or as much as affordable
- quick and easy access to savings
- access to low cost loans
- annual dividend on savings
- supports building an emergency fund

How to become a Payroll Saver

If someone works for an employer that is one of our partners, they can apply to join us straightforward. You can find out if a company is offering their staff a payroll saving with Just CU by viewing the list online:

www.justcreditunion.org/payroll/current-employers/

AFFORDABLE BORROWING



Unexpected expenses happen and sometimes borrowing is necessary. Affordable borrowing should:

- ✓ be transparent
- ✓ have no hidden charges
- ✓ be based on affordability
- ✓ help improve financial resilience

Just CU also encourages borrowers to save while repaying eligible loans, helping build financial security for the future.

BUILDING BETTER FINANCIAL HABITS

Encourage people to:

- save regularly
- review spending
- plan ahead
- build emergency funds
- avoid impulse borrowing
- ask for help early
- small habits often create lasting change

Supporting Different Groups

Just Credit Union can support people including:

- Care leavers
- Social housing tenants
- Low-income workers
- Families
- NHS staff
- Key workers
- People rebuilding after financial difficulty
- Employees using payroll deduction schemes

Case Study

Sally wanted to move into her own home...



By saving £10 each week over 18 weeks through payroll deduction, Sally built more than £780. Those savings paid Sally's rental deposit on her flat. She achieved her goal without feeling the impact of saving a little each payday.



WHEN TO REFER

You can refer parents and families in need of support and vulnerable consumers plus anyone needing to save, borrow or repair their credit score.

Consider if they:

- need affordable borrowing
- want to start saving
- have irregular income
- need help building financial resilience
- want payroll savings
- need an alternative to high-cost lenders

WHAT JUST CREDIT UNION OFFERS

Members can access:

- regular savings or payroll savings
- affordable loans
- online account access
- secure messaging
- friendly local support
- loan protection insurance (subject to eligibility)

Due to legislation and Just CU being an ethical lender, there are some occasions where we cannot assist:

- 1. People who are in a Debt Management Plan or Individual Voluntary Arrangement**
- 2. People whose ONLY income is Universal Credit.**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



Can people save small amounts?

Yes, you decide how much to save so it's affordable.



Can people apply with poor credit?

Yes, but applications are assessed on affordability.



Can savings be withdrawn?

Yes. We provide same day access without penalty.



Are savings protected?

Yes, eligible savings are protected under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.



HOW TO REFER

All of Just CU services are available online: www.justcreditunion.org but we also have a friendly member services team on 01743 252325.

Refer to Just CU when someone:

- needs affordable borrowing
- wants to start saving
- has regular income
- needs help building financial resilience
- wants payroll savings
- needs an alternative to high-cost lenders

WHAT JUST CREDIT UNION OFFERS

Members can access:

- regular savings or payroll savings
- affordable loans
- online account access
- secure messaging
- friendly local support
- life savings protection (subject to eligibility)
- loan protection insurance (subject to eligibility)

Practitioner Checklist



Have you:

- Asked about money?
- Identified financial pressures?
- Discussed savings?
- Considered affordable borrowing?
- Offered a referral?
- Encouraged early action?

Referral Pathway



TOGETHER WE CAN BUILD FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

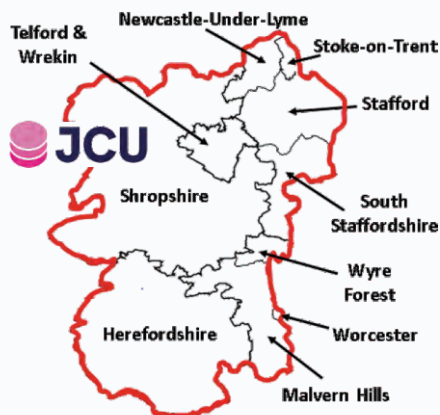


Small changes today can prevent financial crisis tomorrow.

Whether someone wants to begin saving, access affordable borrowing or build long-term financial security, Just Credit Union is here to help.

Who can join?

Anyone who lives or works in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, Herefordshire, Wyre Forest, Malvern Hills, Worcester, Stafford, Newcastle under Lyme, South Staffordshire or Stoke-on-Trent is eligible to join Just CU. Tenants from housing associations in the areas listed above are also eligible to join.



The Potters' Money Hubs provide face-to-face Just CU services and operate in the Stoke-on-Trent area.



Get in touch:

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