

## Relationships and money

The impact of money on relationships at home and at work is huge. Whether you have a lot, enough, struggle or have debts, the impact, attitudes and behaviour affects daily life for everyone.

### Attitudes

Money, like sex, can have some power in a relationship – the more you have, the better things are? The less you have the more you want? It is interesting, however, to take some time to think about your attitude to money.

- Where do you think your ideas about money and how to manage finances, come from?
- Were there positive or negative attitudes about money in your family of origin?
- How did they affect you at the time?
- Are they similar or different from your partner's?
- How do you think they have influenced the way money is managed in your partnership or current family situation?

Find some time to have a relaxed conversation about the answers to these questions. There is usually a benefit in any discussion that helps you both understand the different attitudes you hold.

### Responsibility

It would not be unusual for one person to take more responsibility than another for income and/or expenditure. This often happens without negotiation, people just fall into a pattern of who is responsible for what. That doesn't mean things can't change when circumstances change, or when the pattern isn't working anymore.

Sharing responsibility doesn't necessarily mean, equally. One person may have more time or skills in managing financial matters. On the other hand, sharing ideas, goals and decisions about money will help to avoid conflict.

Who is responsible for what? It is never too late to have this conversation, sometimes it can help to clarify things, and sometimes it helps to re-allocate responsibility e.g. gas and electricity – from one of you to both?

## Arguments

When there are arguments about money, it can be because there are underlying and different problems that may be even more difficult to talk about or manage. A partner, who is secretive about money, might not have the confidence in the relationship to be open about debt. They may feel insecure and worry that their partner will leave them if they discover debt, and the pattern of hiding things just gets bigger and bigger.

Equally, one partner may bury their head in the sand, because they do not want the responsibility of managing a family budget and resentment can build up because the responsibility falls to one person.

Try not to make assumptions about the reactions of a partner when bringing up money problems, they may surprise you – for example, is it you who really wants a holiday away, or are they quite happy to have a week off at home?

## Budgets

Budgets are usually a way for everyone to live within their means. The Money Advice Service is a free, unbiased, independent source of help and you can find an online budget calculator. Check out: [moneyadviceservice.org.uk](https://moneyadviceservice.org.uk)

Other sources of help and advice:

- [stepchange.org/Howwecanhelpyou/Debtadvice.aspx](https://stepchange.org/Howwecanhelpyou/Debtadvice.aspx)
- [gov.uk/options-for-paying-off-your-debts/overview](https://gov.uk/options-for-paying-off-your-debts/overview)

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