

what is a personal budget coach?



getting into shape

A personal budget coach is someone who has been trained to help people put together a household budget.

Budget coaches are not financial experts, just people on the same journey as the rest of us, willing to share what they have learned.

background

Getting fit is never easy. Despite the need for exercise and the best of intentions millions of pounds are wasted every year in unused gym memberships.

It seems that it is just as hard to get in shape financially!

Insurance giant AXA estimate that one in three, that's over 12 million people, don't plan their finances and many of those that do give just five minutes a week. But a firm decision to take control and spend just one hour a month reviewing personal finance could save thousands of pounds. They proved it!

In research 10 households with access to financial advice reduced debts and were collectively £50,000 better off than 10 other households who lost a quarter of their savings.

Just as a fitness coach would help us to get physically fit, one of AXA's key recommendations to get our money in good shape was to find a "financial buddy".

how personal budget coaches work

The longest journey starts with a single step; the journey to taking control of money and finding financial freedom starts with a budget.

A personal budget coach supports people:

- who are in debt crisis or are anxious about money.
- who want to take control of their finances or are going through a life change, e.g. redundancy, university, getting married, bereavement, divorce or separation etc.
- who want the gift of money to work for them and their goals; to be their servant, not their master.
- who want to be generous, faithful stewards of all God has given.

Often the personal budget coach service is provided as part of a Money Ministry.



budget coaching and debt

Personal budget coaches are not debt specialists; they **cannot** give debt advice. But they have a vital role to play. Like a triage nurse, a personal budget coach is trained to help, to assess and refer to specialist help. Personal budget coaches:

- understand and can explain the debt process to those seeking help.
- know how, when and where to refer people to professional, expert help.
- walk this long and lonely Emmaus road with people, listening sensitively, offering hope and healing and new life at the end of the journey.



Budget coaches listen - don't judge, support - don't advise; empower - don't take over.

so what does a personal budget coach do?

A budget coach helps people prepare a budget. The context may be debt or a life change at work or at home. It may be a desire to take control of money or as the foundation for looking biblically at our money and growing in generosity. There will be busy and quiet times. You may be meeting weekly for a while with someone who needs your support. Much will depend on how you promote your own ministry. Briefly you will:

- help individuals, couples and families (your 'clients') prepare a realistic budget, while providing practical support, encouragement and pastoral care.
- promote your Personal Budget Coach ministry in your own church, and maybe later in other local churches and, if you are comfortable, in your local community.
- receive pastoral referrals from your pastor who will have confidence in your ministry.
- refer people to a specialist debt adviser where necessary and provide ongoing support as they work through the problem.

what do I need to be a personal budget coach?

You must have the willingness to develop a biblical perspective on money, learn good personal money management and have the support of your church leadership. In addition you will need:

- to attend the full day personal budget coach training provided by Credit Action (www.creditaction.org.uk), prepare your own household budget and to stay informed and up-to-date around financial capability. good interpersonal skills, sensitivity, confidentiality and a non-judgemental approach.
- the ability to add, subtract and use a calculator to create a paper-based budget. The ability to use a software spreadsheet is entirely optional.

money advocacy

Your personal budget coaching ministry will be both grounded and more effective if it is exercised in the wider context of the work of an individual money advocate or of a money ministry team in your church.

- ➔ Visit the taking action tab at www.stewardship.org.uk/money for more details of how you can take money education forward in your church and community.

so what do I do next?

- ➔ Contact Credit Action at office@creditaction.org.uk to register your interest in the training and find out what courses may be running.

