

## Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a new type of benefit designed to support people who are on a low income or out of work. You can find more information or claim online at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit>.

## Get advice

Our Rent Arrears and Court Action leaflets list a number of useful agencies you should contact for specialist benefits or debt advice.

Your Housing Officer can give you basic debt advice. S/he can also refer you to our Welfare Rights service or an agency; if this would help you to make that first contact.

Manor Estates Housing Association  
Suite 4, 5 New Mart Place  
Edinburgh, EH14 1RW

Tel:- 0131 510 8540

Email: [info@manorestates.org.uk](mailto:info@manorestates.org.uk)

Web:- [www.manorestates.org.uk](http://www.manorestates.org.uk)

Do you need information provided in a different language or format?



HAPPY TO TRANSLATE

We can arrange to have information translated into most languages - please contact the office for further information.

We can also provide information in alternative formats (for example, large font or on CD) - again, contact the office for further details.



**MANORESTATES**  
Housing Association



# Money Management And Debt

## Money Management and Debt

Many people have money problems at some time in their lives. The most important thing to do is to tackle the problem as soon as possible.

### Prioritise your debts

Your debts can be classed as either priority or non-priority, depending on the consequences for arrears or non-payment:

Priority debt	Consequences
Rent arrears	<b>Decree for eviction:</b> means you may lose your home. After eviction, the debt is still owed if there is a <b>Decree for payment:</b> this means you may have wages arrested.  <b>Payment decree:</b> means you will be liable for contributing to your landlord's legal costs.
Council Tax arrears	Court action, fines, imprisonment. After imprisonment, the debt is still owed.
Gas, Electricity arrears	Court action, fines, disconnection.
Tax and VAT arrears	Interest charges daily on arrears, bankruptcy or imprisonment.
Maintenance/child support arrears	Wage arrestment, imprisonment
Unpaid court fines	Imprisonment (unless a credit debt).

Non-priority debts include: credit cards, store cards, unsecured loans, unpaid telephone bills, overdrafts, catalogue debts, some hire-purchase debts.

The consequences of these debts will result in difficulty obtaining further or future credit and repossession of items like cars or household goods. If a debt collection agency traces you and you are working, they can apply for a wage arrestment.

**Did you know:** you can refuse a key or card meter for a gas or electricity debt and ask instead for a payment card which you can use at the Post Office?

If you have no money to pay non-priority debts, you should still contact the creditors. You can ask them to hold action until your circumstances improve, offer a token payment or to freeze interest on your debts.



### Maximise your income

If you are working, check you are in receipt of the National Minimum Wage or National Living Wage. National Minimum Wage rates change every October. National Living Wage rates change every April. You can find more details at <https://www.gov.uk/national-minimum-wage-rates>.

If you work more than 30 hours a week, you may be eligible for Working Tax Credit. Additionally if you have parental responsibility for a child, you should claim Child Tax Credit. Please contact HMRC on 0345 300 3900 to discuss a claim.

There are also basic bank accounts offered by most high street banks that allow you to receive money and pay bills without the need for a credit check. All allow you to set up direct debits, which is good news as this usually means you get things cheaper.

**It is crucial that you ensure you know exactly what money you have in the account and manage it carefully to avoid bank charges.**

If you are not working, a number of agencies can help you check you are receiving all the benefits you are entitled to.