



Money &
Pensions
Service

Mental health, money questions and signposting

A guide for mental
health professionals



Introduction

Who is this guide for?

This guide is designed to support any mental health professionals across the UK who plan to use the Mental Health & Money Question and Signposting Tool.

What is the Mental Health & Money Question and Signposting Tool?

The Mental Health & Money Question and Signposting Tool (the Tool) is a set of questions which you can ask someone that you are working with to find out if they have any money worries which may be having an effect on their mental health, and therefore on their recovery.

Depending on the answers the person gives, the Tool also provides suggestions for services and useful resources that you can signpost or refer the person to. This will enable them to get free, independent help for their money problem.

The Tool features a range of services and resources that are available nationally but can be customised to also include services that exist in your local area.

Why have you developed it?

We know that 74% of people who experience a mental health problem struggle to keep up with bills and payments¹. We also know that 25% of people who experience a mental health problem are likely to be in problem debt².

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The Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) developed the Tool following conversations with the North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care System (ICS). The team were aware of the high numbers of people in the area who were experiencing money worries which were causing or exacerbating mental health issues. Mental health professionals working within ICS said that although they were aware of the links between mental health and money, they weren't sure which questions to ask or what to do with the answers.

How was the Tool developed?

The Money and Pensions Service worked with the ICS, Money and Mental Health Policy Institute, Rethink Mental Illness, Cumbria, Northumberland and Tyne and Wear NHS Trust IPS Service, South Tyneside and Sunderland NHS Trust Life Cycle Service and Tyneside and Northumberland Mind to develop and test the Tool. It was independently evaluated by Involve North East.

Based on the findings of that evaluation, MaPS updated the Tool.

¹ Adult Financial Wellbeing Survey (2022) Money and Pensions Service.

² The Facts (2019) Money and Mental Health Policy Institute

Why should I use it?

We know that 91% of people who are struggling with their mental health avoid talking about money, often because they feel embarrassment, guilt or shame. Given the known links between mental health and money, we recommend normalising conversations about money to reduce these feelings.

By asking, offering to assist and signposting to money guidance and advice, at the same time as providing mental health support, you will be ensuring the person you're working with gets the help they need for both issues.

91% 

of people who are struggling with their mental health avoid talking about money

Who should I use it with?

Considering the links between money and mental health, you may want to ask everyone you work with if they have any money worries that may be impacting on their mental health.

Following this, you can ask whether they would like to explore this further and see what support might be available in relation to their individual situation.

When should I use it?

It's up to you to decide when to ask the questions within the therapeutic or clinical work you are doing with a patient. You may want to ask about money at the start of the relationship when you are gathering information about the person's overall circumstances, or you may want to wait until you have built up a trusting relationship.

Use your professional judgement as to whether it's the right time to ask questions about money.

What should I tell people before using the Tool?

We would recommend managing expectations before using the Tool.

You should let the person know that you are not a money adviser, and you are not able to provide any immediate advice or guidance about their money situation – the exception to this may be if you are trained and insured to do so. However, you can explore any money issues that might be causing concern and offer to find services or resources that can help.

Feedback from most people who trialled the Tool said they would appreciate advance notice of any conversations about money.

If you/your service decides to record the answers to the questions, tell the person this will happen and what you will do with the information.

Should I record the information?

This is up to you and your service.

You may find it helpful to note that you have discussed money worries with your service user and record any signposting or referrals to other services you have made, as this could help with continuity of care.

At a service level, you may want to record how many people the service is working with that have money problems, in order to inform service design and stakeholder relationship building.

If you do record any elements of the money conversation, remember to tell the person in advance and let them know why you are recording it and what you will do with the information.

Can I make contact with money advice services on behalf of the person?

This will depend on the nature and remit of your role and the service you work in.

Some people, especially if struggling with their mental health, find it difficult to access information online or make telephone calls to services they don't know, and therefore supporting them to be able to access the services or resources may be very helpful.

How can I add local services to the Tool?

The Tool is an editable .pdf file, so you can save it and add in local services that you know about which can help people with the range of money issues covered in the Tool.

Where can I get further information or support about money matters?

The Money and Pensions Service is working to ensure health and care professionals are supported to have conversations with the people they work with about money and to ensure there are tools and resources available to help. You can find out more about the support that is available at moneyandpensionservice.org.uk/improve-financial-wellbeing-for-your-patients





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