

I feel I have no option but to borrow money

If you feel that you have no option but to borrow money, there may be more alternatives than you realise – even if you have a poor credit history.

If you are considering borrowing because you are struggling to make ends meet, you might find some useful guidance under our [“I am struggling to make ends meet”](#) section.

If you are borrowing to service an existing debt, it may be advisable to consider seeking expert advice from some of the agencies outlined in our [“I am struggling with existing debt”](#) section.

What to consider when taking a short-term loan

If you are facing circumstances where you feel that a short-term loan is the only option available to you, then it is worth considering all of the alternatives. The [MoneyHelper](#) website can help by providing information on the different types of borrowing. **It is essential that you consider all of your options before making any decisions.**

You should only ever consider borrowing from a licensed and authorised lender. Informal or illegal lenders operate in many areas and prey on people who believe they have no alternative but to borrow from them because of a bad credit history or because they are on low income or benefits.

Illegal lenders frequently are not clear about how much you need to repay and often demand very high interest rates so you might end up having to pay back much more than you bargained for. But things can quickly get worse if you can't pay back the loan - they may intimidate you by threatening violence, or take valuable items from you as an alternative to repayment.

When you need to borrow smaller amounts for a short period of time, door-step lenders or "pay day loan" companies may often seem like your only other option but there are alternative lenders out there which you might consider.

Remember, all lenders will charge you interest to borrow money, so it is important to find the best option for you and to understand all of the terms & conditions.

Credit unions

The credit union movement in Northern Ireland is well established and there may well be a credit union in your local area. Credit unions are run by members for members and they provide loans at very reasonable and fair interest rates. Credit unions are members of the [Irish League of Credit Unions](#) or the [Ulster Federation of Credit Unions](#) and both organisations can provide details of credit unions available in your area. In addition, there are a number of independent credit unions in Northern Ireland.

Finding Finance

[Finding Finance](#) is an educational tool provided by **Responsible Finance**. The members of this organisation offer simple affordable loans when the bank can't help.

FairForYou

[FairForYou](#) is a not-for-profit community interest company established to provide an alternative to high-cost “rent-to-own” services. FairForYou allows customers to buy essential items for their home, with flexible credit and repayments tailored to their income. It also now offers Food Club Loans via its Iceland Food Club Card.

You may also be interested in

I am worried about illegal lending

If you have already borrowed from someone you believe is not licensed to lend, there is help and guidance available.

I am struggling to make ends meet

If your financial situation is a constant worry, there is help available with budgeting, benefits, housing, debt and other advice to help you manage your money better.

I am struggling with existing debt

If you already have debt that you are worried about, there are debt advice agencies who can advise and provide you with options to help deal with your debt.

The Consumer Council for Northern Ireland is authorised and regulated by The Financial Conduct Authority to act as a credit broker. Our Firm Number is 913082.