If you want to get on top of your finances creating a budget is a really good way to start. A budget is simply a record of money you have coming in, and all your expenses going out. Examples of money coming in are your salary or wages, any pensions or benefits. Expenses going out are all the payments you make such as your rent or mortgage, insurance, and council tax, as well as living expenses and any other regular or irregular spending.

There are different ways and tools you can use to create a budget, for example online using the Money Advice Service budget planner, on paper by downloading the Money Advice Service worksheet, or on your computer using your own spreadsheet.

If your budget shows that you're spending more each month than you have coming in then the next step is to look more closely at where your money is going and where you can cut back.

Even small amounts for things like magazines, sandwiches at lunchtime, or Saturday take-aways can add up to a surprisingly large amount.