

MONEY TALK

Your monthly financial wellbeing news, tips and updates, brought to you by Lifetime

Valentine's Day Isn't Just for Couples

At a time of year when messaging can feel heavily couple-focused, Valentine's Day is a good reminder to check in on your own financial wellbeing.

JanuScary Is Over Now's the Time to Reset Your Finances

It's common to arrive in February feeling relieved, but still unsure about what to do next.

Understanding and Supporting Financial Wellbeing at Work

Lifetime have developed a CPD-accredited course focused on financial wellbeing at work.

When Retirement Suddenly Feels Closer Than Expected

If you're starting to think about what comes next, creating a financial plan can be a helpful first step.



Valentine's Day Isn't Just for Couples

Valentine's Day often centres around couples, shared meals, shared plans, and very often, shared costs. But with more people living alone than ever, it's just as important to recognise the financial realities faced by single households.

Living solo can bring independence, flexibility, and freedom, but it can also mean shouldering every bill alone. From rent and utilities to subscriptions and everyday essentials, single households often face what's sometimes referred to as the "single premium", paying more simply because there's no one to split the costs with. At a time of year when messaging can feel heavily couple-focused, Valentine's Day is a good reminder to check in on your own financial wellbeing.

Valentine's Day Isn't Just for Couples

Here are a few simple ways single households can reduce costs and strengthen their financial position:



Make sure you're receiving the single person council tax discount

If you live alone, you may be entitled to a 25% single person discount on your council tax. It's easy to assume this is applied automatically, but in many areas you need to apply directly through your local council. A quick check could lead to meaningful savings over the year.



Consider installing a water meter

If your home isn't already on a water meter, switching could reduce your bills, particularly if you live alone or use less water than the average household. Many providers will install a meter free of charge.



Share subscriptions where possible

Many services now allow multi-user access, sharing with trusted friends or family members can significantly reduce monthly costs while still giving everyone access to the same benefits.



Think about long-term savings options, such as a Lifetime ISA

For those saving towards a first home or later life, a Lifetime ISA (LISA) can be a helpful option. While it's important to check eligibility and withdrawal rules, for many single savers this can provide a valuable long-term boost.



Talk about money - even if you live alone

Managing finances solo can sometimes feel isolating, particularly when there's no one else involved in household decisions. Speaking to someone you trust, a friend, family member, financial coach, or adviser, can provide reassurance, fresh perspective, and practical ideas you may not have considered. Money conversations don't need to be formal to be helpful; sometimes simply talking things through can reduce stress and improve confidence.



A different way to think about Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day doesn't have to be solely about romantic relationships. It can also be a chance to focus on self-care, long-term goals and building financial security for the future. Whether that means reviewing your bills, starting a savings plan or simply having an open conversation about money, small steps taken now can make a meaningful difference over time.

Living alone doesn't mean planning alone. Now could be a great time to book a session and map out your next financial steps. [Book a chat with a coach today!](#)



January can feel long. Between post-Christmas spending, New Year expectations, and constant money headlines, it's common to arrive in February feeling relieved, but still unsure about what to do next.

JANUARY IS OVER!

Around this time of year, one topic that often starts cropping up is starting to add to a Lifetime ISA, or LISA. It's usually mentioned in conversations about buying a first home or planning for the future, but it isn't always clearly explained in a way that's easy to understand.

Who can open one and how long can you save?

There are age limits to be aware of. You must be between 18 and 39 to open a Lifetime ISA. Once it's open, you can continue paying into it until you reach the age of 50, and the government bonus is added to contributions made up to that point.

A Lifetime ISA is a type of savings account designed to help people work towards long-term goals. You can save up to £4,000 into a Lifetime ISA each tax year, and the government will then add a 25% bonus on top of what you put in. So, if you save the full £4,000, you'll receive an extra £1,000 from the government. Over time, that additional boost can make a meaningful difference.

How a Lifetime ISA can be used

A Lifetime ISAs can support two main long-term goals, the first being buying your first home, provided the property costs £450,000 or less. The second is saving for later life, often alongside other options such as a workplace pension. Because of this, many people use a Lifetime ISA as part of a longer-term plan rather than for short-term spending.



Understanding withdrawals and charges

How and when you take money out matters. If the savings are used to buy an eligible first home, or if they're accessed later in life, the government bonus remains in place. However, if you withdraw the money for any other reason, a 25% charge applies. This doesn't just remove the bonus, it also reduces part of your own savings, meaning you could receive back less than you originally put in.

Because of these rules, a Lifetime ISA isn't right for everyone. For some, it can play a useful role within a wider financial plan. For others, different savings options or focusing on more

pension contributions may be a better fit. What matters most is understanding how each option works together so you can choose what aligns best with your life and long-term goals.

What matters most is choosing what works for your life and your goals. If you'd like a clear, jargon-free overview, take a few minutes to watch our short video on Lifetime ISAs.

February can be a good time to look at this calmly, with a clearer head and without pressure. Building understanding, even without making any decisions straight away, can help you feel more confident about the steps you take next.

Understanding and Supporting Financial Wellbeing at Work



Money worries don't switch off when the working day begins. They often come to work with us, quietly affecting focus, confidence and overall wellbeing, even when everything else looks fine on the surface.

For those who support others at work, whether in HR, management or wellbeing roles, this can be difficult to navigate. You may notice changes in behaviour or performance, without always knowing what's sitting underneath. Starting conversations about money can feel uncomfortable, particularly when there's a fear of saying the wrong thing.

That's why understanding the link between money and wellbeing is so important in the workplace. When people feel more confident

recognising financial stress, they're better placed to respond with care and empathy and to help others access the right support.

To support this, we have developed a CPD-accredited course focused on financial wellbeing at work. The course is designed to help HR leaders, managers and people professionals build awareness, recognise the signs of financial stress and feel more confident creating a culture of openness and support.

The aim isn't to turn anyone into a financial expert; it's building understanding, encouraging better conversations, and helping people signpost support in a way that feels appropriate, practical and human.

If you'd like to find out more about the course, [click here](#).

When Retirement Suddenly Feels Closer Than Expected

For many people in the UK, the mid-fifties mark a subtle but important shift: there's no sudden change in health, motivation or capability, yet this is often the point when access to pension savings becomes an option. That moment can prompt a new line of thinking: not just can I take money from my pension, but should I?

When those questions arise, pension access can easily be mistaken for a signal to slow down or step away from work altogether. Even if nothing else has changed, the idea of retirement can start to feel closer than it needs to be, simply because the option is suddenly on the table.

What's often missing is a clear understanding of the choices available and how each decision can affect future income, tax and long-term security. Taking time to understand your options, without pressure to act, can make a real difference and help you feel more confident about what comes next.

You don't have to decide everything at once. Sometimes, understanding your options is the most valuable first step. If you're starting to think about what comes next, creating a financial plan can be a helpful first step. It's not about making big decisions straight away, but about understanding your options and having a clearer picture of how your money could support the life you want to live. Start your financial plan and explore your retirement options with confidence.



Base Rate Update

Earlier this month, on the 5th of February, the Bank of England confirmed it would hold the UK base rate at 3.75%. For most people, that means there's been no sudden change, mortgages, savings and borrowing costs largely remain as they were.

A base rate hold often signals a period of relative stability, even if the wider picture still feels uncertain. Inflation may be easing, but not enough yet to trigger a cut. While this can feel uneventful, it can be a useful moment to pause and take stock.

This links closely to the focus on ISAs in this month's newsletter. When rates are steady, it's a good opportunity to check whether your savings are still working in the right way for you, whether that's through an ISA, a Lifetime ISA, or another option entirely. It's less about reacting to headlines, and more about understanding where you are now and how your money fits into your longer-term plans.

As always, small reviews can be just as valuable as big changes, especially when you have the time and space to think things through calmly.

If you have any questions, a free chat with one of our Mortgage Advisers is included in your benefit, book today!



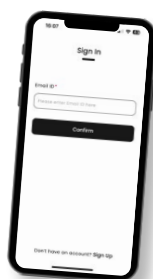
The Lifetime Wellbeing App has had an upgrade

We've refreshed the app from top to bottom to make it even easier for your people to understand and improve their financial wellbeing. With a cleaner design and a range of new tools, the experience is now more intuitive and more supportive than ever. Here's what's new:



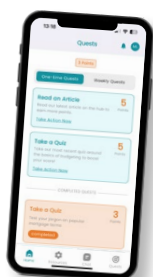
Financial Wellbeing Score:

A simple snapshot of overall financial health. As employees use the app's resources, their score updates in real time, showing the positive impact of their actions over time.



Quick Sign-Up:

Getting started takes just a few minutes, so users can begin improving their score from the moment they log in.



Quizzes and Quests:

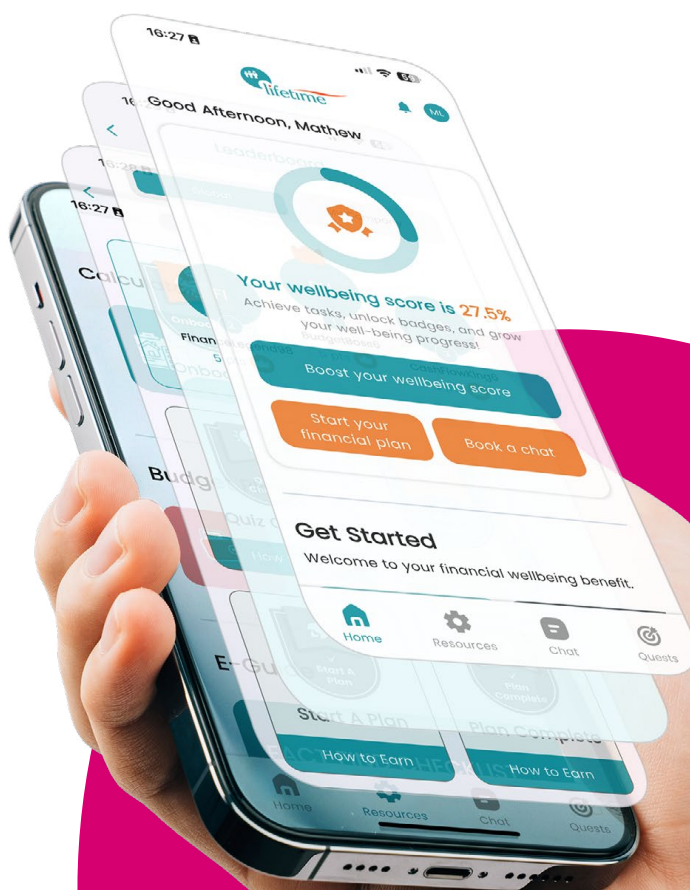
New interactive activities designed to help users learn, build positive habits, and boost their financial wellbeing score.



Ask a Coach:

Employees can now message a financial wellbeing coach directly, no forms, no waiting, just quick access to personalised guidance.

If you haven't already, download the updated app and explore the new features yourself.



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