

Activity: Sorting the post

Put learners into small groups and give each a batch of 5 sample letters, attached as handouts, then ask them to sort them into 'important' and 'not so important', discussing the reasons for their decisions as they do so.

This activity can also be done with single clients in a one-on-one setting.

Questions for discussion:

- How did they make their decisions about which bills/debts were most important?
- Did the letters seem written in a certain way? What effect do you think they were going for?
- Are there some things that might be seen as 'priority' to the clients that would, strictly speaking, otherwise fit under 'non priority'?

If used in conjunction with a priority/non-priority budgeting exercise, explain that not paying some bills has more effect than others. The most important bills are called priority debts. If you don't pay a priority debt the result can be serious, such as losing your home. Other bills are called non priority debts. They still matter but the result of not paying them is not as serious. Get the client to look at their letters again and sort them into 'priority' and 'non priority' according to the definition they've been given.

If this was useful, why not try...

Debt – Priority and non-priority debts (quick reference)
Debt – Debt emergency cards



Great Power Electric
PO Box 333
Birmingham

██████████
██████████ Street
Notown

Our ref: FG/1234/98765

30 January 2015

Immediate Action Required
Final Reminder for £305.39 owed

You still have not paid your electricity bill even though we sent you a reminder giving you details of the different ways you can pay.

If you do not pay your account, or contact us, within the next 7 days we will take action to recover the debt. We will either fit a card prepayment meter or cut off your electricity supply. If you don't let us in when we call we will immediately ask a magistrate for a warrant which lets us enter your property even if you are not there. We can do this by law. If we do this it could mean you will also have to pay costs of up to £31.30.

If you cannot pay phone us free on 0800 xxx xxx. It is in your own interest to contact us to discuss a payment arrangement. Do not delay, call us now.

Credit account number: 344 4040

Amount due: £305.39

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Code: 11-22-33

Cash/Cheque total



Natural Gas
PO Box 222
Manchester

██████████
██████████ Avenue
Notown

Our ref: NG/1234/05067

30 January 2015

Final Notice
Immediate Action Necessary To Pay £193.64 Owed

You still have not paid your Gas bill even though we sent you a reminder including details of how you can pay the amount you owe.

If you do not pay your account, or contact us, within the next 10 days we will take action to recover the debt.

We will either cut off your gas supply or fit a card prepayment meter. If you don't let us in when we call we will immediately ask a magistrate for a warrant which lets us enter your property even if you are not there. We can do this by law. If we do this it could mean you will also have to pay costs of up to £31.30.

If you cannot pay phone us on 0808 xxx xxx. It is in your own interest to contact us to discuss a payment arrangement.

Credit account number: 05067

Amount due: £193.64

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Code: 33-22-33

Cash/Cheque total



Borough of Anytown
Anytown Town Hall
Gabriel Road, Anytown

██████████
██████████ Avenue,
Anytown

15 January 2015

Dear ██████████

You currently have rent arrears of:
Rent of £385.00 is owed at 1 November 2014.

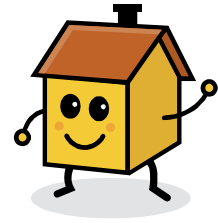
If you do not clear these arrears, the Mayor and Burgesses of the Borough of Anytown intend to take legal action and apply to Court for an order requiring you to give up possession of your home.

If you want to discuss this letter you should contact your Neighbourhood Housing Officer.

Signed P Chen

Head of Legal Services

On behalf of the Mayor and Burgesses of the Borough of Anytown, Anytown
Town Hall, Gabriel Road, Anytown Tel: 000 123 4567



Happy Housing
Main Street
Anytown

Room [REDACTED]
Happy Housing Hostel
Anytown

25 November 2014

Dear [REDACTED]

You currently have rent arrears of £85.00
Rent of £85.00 is owed at 20 November 2014.

If you do not clear these arrears, Happy Housing can evict you from your room at Happy Housing Hostel. We can take legal action and apply to Court for an order requiring you to pay this money owed.

You have been warned about paying the rent you owe.

If you want to discuss this notice you should contact your Hostel support worker.

A Bunbury

A Bunbury
Head of Legal Services at Happy Housing

Friendly Personal Credit

Mrs [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Street
Anytown

Ref: 1122
Customer no: 4455

Dear Mrs [REDACTED]

Re: Outstanding Balance £1241.65
Contracted Weekly Rate £40.50

NOTIFICATION OF SERIOUS ARREARS

DESPITE OUR PREVIOUS LETTER AND RECENT VISITS, your account is now seriously in arrears.

You have failed to make the agreed payments and you therefore in breach of your contract.

YOU MUST re-commence weekly payments to your Agent and bring your account up to date otherwise debt recovery action may be taken against you.

If you are unable to re-commence payments you must contact your local office immediately.

Due to your current level of arrears, further credit is unlikely to be authorised until your account is brought up to date.

Yours sincerely,

Mr I MacIntosh
MANAGER
OFFICE: Friendly House, Town Centre, Anytown

Aggregated Collections, 1 Union Street, Anytown

██████████ ██████████

██████████ Street

Anytown

FORMAL NOTICE OF LEGAL ACTION

Dear Ms ██████████

I regret to note that you are not making payments as agreed despite all our efforts to help you.

THIS SITUATION CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO CONTINUE.

I now advise you of our intention to commence legal proceedings. I will remind you that, if a judgement is entered and the debt remains unpaid, we have the right to take any or all of the following actions:

- Warrant of Execution against your belongings by a court appointed bailiff;
- Attachment of earnings against your current and future employers;
- Bankruptcy if the debt exceeds £750;
- A charging order against your property (if you are a homeowner).

All judgements are recorded with the relevant credit reference agencies and will make it extremely difficult for you to obtain future credit facilities.

There remains one way to prevent the course of action I have described above. Contact me to discuss this option.

Yours Faithfully,

A. Griffiths, Regional Manager 0111 223344

P.S. DO NOT IGNORE THIS SITUATION, IT WILL NOT GO AWAY UNLESS YOU HELP US TO HELP YOU

Mobile phone company
1 New Street
Anytown



██████████
██████████ Terrace
Anytown

Bill for your mobile phone

1 August – 1 September 2015

Line rental	£ 15.00
Calls	£ 5.00
Texts	£ 2.30
Total	£ 22.30

**PAY NOW OR YOUR PHONE MAY BE CUT OFF.
YOU MAY THEN BE LIABLE FOR RECONNECTION CHARGES.**

**Anytown Magistrates Court
Court Buildings
Anytown**



30 November 2014

Case ref: [REDACTED]

Mr [REDACTED], [REDACTED] Street, Anytown

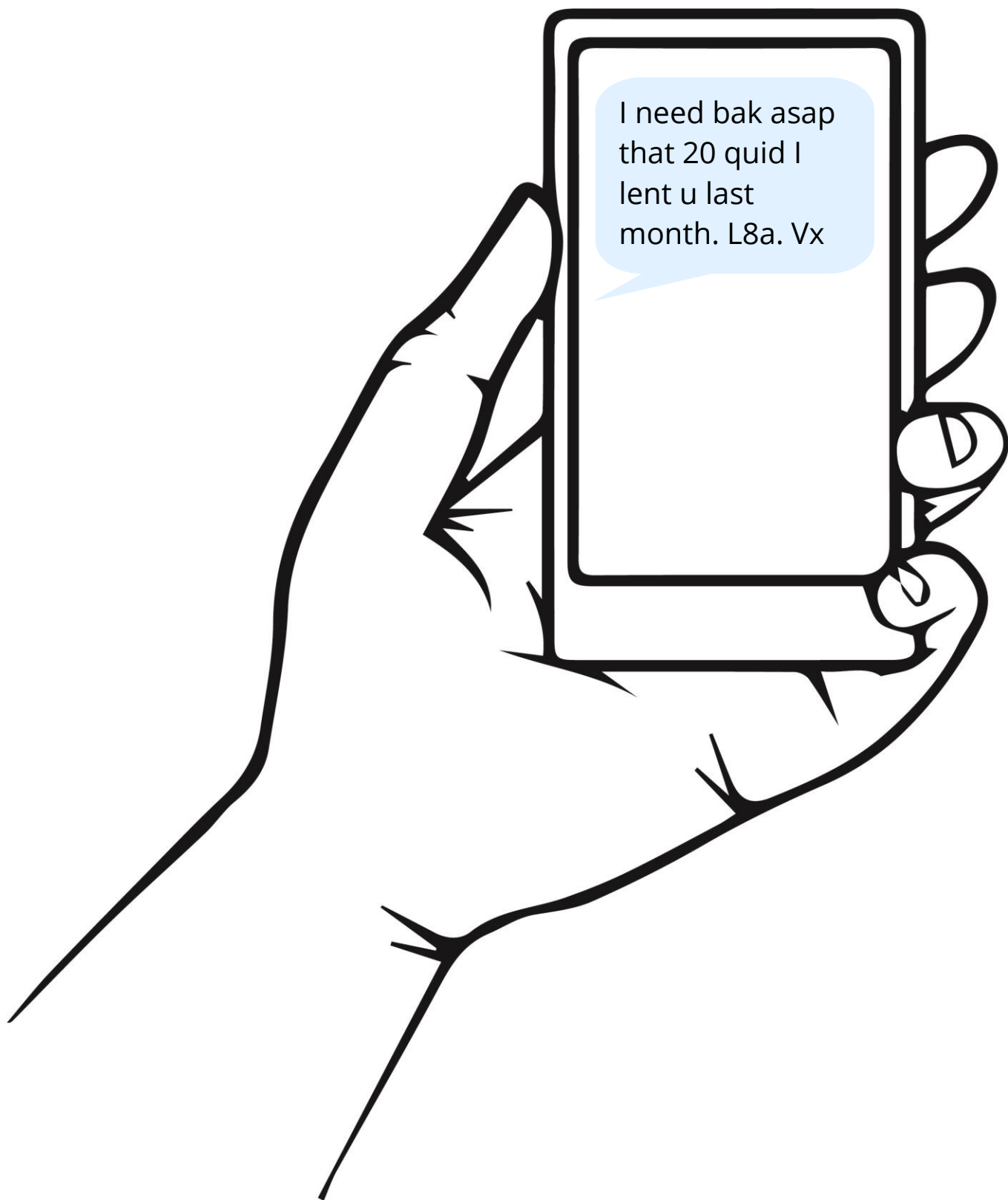
Your fine from Case ref: [REDACTED] is £120.00.

This fine is due in weekly instalments of £10.00.

If you miss a payment, this will be seen as a default in payment. Further action can then be taken.

J Omari

Signed for
Court administrator
Anytown Magistrates Court



I need bak asap
that 20 quid I
lent u last
month. L8a. Vx