

MAKE THE MOST OUT OF YOUR MONEY

in 2012!

You worked hard for it, now what's the best way to make it last? *Pride* asked the Financial Ombudsman Service – the free service with the power to sort out problems between consumers and financial businesses – for tips on making this the year you get the most out of your money.

They really loved the 2-for-1 deal on tape measures

Last year the ombudsman received over 300 complaints about mobile phone insurance, often about restrictions on the policies. Speak to your insurer to see what you're covered for and cancel anything you don't need.

Cost-effective credit:


If you're treating yourself to a new three piece suite, or having a kitchen or bathroom fitted, you might be considering using an interest-free credit deal. These agreements allow you to spread the cost of the purchase for an extended period without paying interest – sometimes for the first few years. If you sign up, make sure you pay off the agreement before the interest kicks in as these repayments can be expensive.

Spread the risk:

If you're considering investing your money, take some time to think about how much risk you're willing to take. If it's appropriate to your circumstances, you might also consider taking some financial advice. There are a wide range of investment plans – and the more risk you're willing to take, the more potential return you could make. But investment returns aren't guaranteed, so don't take a chance if you can't afford to risk your capital.

Plan ahead:

From paying a little extra into your pension to taking out life insurance, investing in the future can give you some peace of mind should life throw up any surprises. But make sure you know how it works – some life policies are 'reviewable' which means they can go up after a number of years.

Whether you're making your money work for you or spending your hard earned cash, we hope you'll find this year financial-problem free! However, if something goes wrong, speak to the financial business – they should be able to sort things out. If you still aren't happy, the financial ombudsman might be able to help. 

Take interest:

Interest rates may be historically low, but that doesn't mean that there aren't some better rates out there. Shop around online for the best rate for your savings, but before signing up, check if there are any restrictions on withdrawing your cash early. If you're able to give a few months notice before you make a withdrawal, you might get a much better rate.

Cut out the clutter:

You wouldn't pay twice to buy the same item in a shop, so make sure you're not doing it with your finances. Many of the insurance policies you take out when shopping – like mobile phone insurance or warranties – might already be covered by your home and contents policy.

And remember! You can contact the ombudsman service on 0300 123 9 123 or www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk