

Brides and grooms get the budgeting blues

1 in 4 people in the North West fail to keep a tab on their wedding finances

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Maths muddles are threatening to overshadow the happiest day of people's lives, according to latest figures released by the Get On campaign*. With around a quarter of a million people expected to tie the knot this year, a poll of over 4,000 adults reveals that a quarter of brides and grooms in the North West admit to failing to make a budget at all for their big day, leading to overspends which could equal the cost of a honeymoon.

20 percent of married people in the North West found they spent more money than expected, going into the red by an average of £790, although some people splashed out up to £15,000 more than they originally intended.

The findings reveal an overall trend in which would-be weds are shying away from the financial side of their nuptials, either by failing to accurately research the cost of all the elements that make up their big day, or by having problems with the figures. 51 percent of overspending respondents felt that everything had simply cost more than they had originally envisaged. A further 21 percent laid the blame on the excitement of getting married – claiming to have just got carried away in the moment.

In response to the survey findings, the Get On campaign is urging prospective brides and grooms to contact them if they think their wedding budgeting problems stem from a lack of confidence in their own maths ability. Gareth Thomas, Skills Policy Director – Integrated Employment and Skills, Learning and Skills Council said:

“Getting married is a hugely exciting time in anyone’s life, but no fun if you spend the months leading up to the big day worrying about your sums. For those that struggle with maths, managing a large budget can add extra worry to an already stressful period.

“Some people tend to shy away from dealing with complicated money matters and budgeting, but it doesn’t need to be as scary as you think. The message to anyone experiencing difficulties is to call 0800 66 0800 to find out how you can brush up on your maths skills.”

Relate spokesperson Cath Allen said:

“It’s no surprise that couples admit to going into the red for their wedding preparation, however, the survey findings show that couples really need to sit down with their calculator and agree a realistic wedding budget that suits them both. There’s no doubt that couples will have to compromise, negotiate, communicate, and really focus on the things that matter most to them – it’s a perfect blue-print for married life.”

Experts from Get On have provided some simple wedding budgeting tips to get people started:

1. **DO YOUR HOMEWORK:** as the study shows, most people find they overspend because the budget they have set is not realistic in the first place. Before going any further, make sure you look at all the suppliers you are hoping to use and make detailed notes of all the likely costs
2. **SET A CAP:** once you’ve done your research, set a realistic total budget spend, making sure this includes a minimum contingency allowance for any surprise spending, extra guests or that something you just cannot resist. We recommend 10% of your total budget should be set aside ‘just in case’
3. **BRUSH UP ON YOUR SKILLS:** if you’re worried about managing a large budget and think your maths skills could do with a makeover in time for the big day, call Get On on 0800 66 0800 and find out about free courses in your local area

4. **TALLY-HO:** keep a note of all your spending and hold onto all receipts and invoices. Keep a list or if you feel confident of your IT skills, try using a spreadsheet to keep tally of all your purchases. Remember to include even the very small purchases like table decorations as well as major outlays – as these all add up!
5. **CHECK, NOT CHEQUE:** every week, check back to see if you are staying on track and if you need to make any adjustments to your spending
6. **KEEP TALKING:** if other people are contributing to the wedding fund, make sure you maintain a good open dialogue with them to make sure they are aware of what money you need and when you'll need it – so they don't get any nasty surprises!

And the most important tip:

7. **DON'T FORGET TO HAVE FUN:** budgeting is not meant to be a chore – think of it as a way to make sure that you get to spend money on the things you love – with no hidden bills or worries to spoil your special day

Get On provide free and impartial advice about free courses on offer to all adults wanting to brush up on their maths skills. The courses, which offer an entirely different experience from people's school days, focus on helping adults improve their skills so they can deal with practical, everyday situations in life and work. To find out more visit

www.geton.direct.gov.uk

Ends

*The research was conducted between 29-31st May 2008 by YouGov and polled 4,245 adults across Great Britain.

Learning and Skills Council:

The LSC exists to make England better skilled and more competitive. We are responsible for ensuring the availability of high-quality education and training for everyone. We have a

single goal: to improve the skills of England's young people and adults to world class standards. Our vision is that young people and adults in England have knowledge and skills matching the best in the world and are part of a truly competitive workforce. We work nationally, regionally and locally to deliver this ambition on behalf of learners and employers.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

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Notes to editors:

Skills for Life

1. The Skills for Life Strategy was launched in 2001 to tackle the legacy of adults with poor literacy, language and numeracy skills within England. The strategy aims to help create a society where adults have the basic skills they need to find and keep work and participate fully in society, through:

- Boosting demand for learning
- Ensuring capacity of the learning provider delivery system
- Improving standards of teaching and learning
- Increasing learner achievement

2. The Skills for Life National Needs and Impact Survey of Literacy, Numeracy and IT skills, published in October 2003, estimated that in England, 5.2 million adults aged 16-65

have literacy levels below Level 1 (broadly equivalent in difficulty to an English GCSE at grades D-G), and 6.8 million have numeracy skills below Entry Level 3 (the level expected of 11 year olds). The full survey is available at www.dfes.gov.uk/research.

3. The LSC's "Get On" campaign, which was first launched by the then Department for Education and Skills in 2001, is part of the Government's Skills for Life Strategy. The campaign encourages the millions of people in England who experience difficulties with literacy, language and numeracy skills, or would benefit from 'brushing up' on these skills, to enrol on a free course by calling **0800 66 0800**. It aims to help create a society where adults have the basic skills they need to find and keep work and participate fully in society.

4. The Government recently met and exceeded the target to ensure that 1,500,000 adults improved their skills and gained a qualification by 2007. The Government aims to increase this to 2.25 million achievements by 2010. So far, 1,759,000 learners have achieved a first Skills for Life qualification.