

WEEK 1 | WEALTH POD TASK

Case Study: The Lifestyle Creep

Work through this with your Wealth Pod before next Friday

Instructions: Read through James's situation together as a group. Then work through the discussion questions and create a plan for him. Be prepared to present your analysis and recommendations next Friday!

Meet James

James is 32 years old and works as a marketing manager in Birmingham. He earns **£42,000 per year**, which gives him approximately **£2,700 per month after tax**.

James feels frustrated. He's been earning a decent salary for three years now, but he still has almost nothing saved. Every month, he tells himself "this month will be different," but it never is. He usually ends up dipping into his overdraft by the last week of the month.

"I don't even spend on anything crazy," James says. "I don't buy designer clothes or go on expensive holidays. I just don't understand where it all goes."

James's Financial Profile

Monthly Income: £2,700 (after tax)

FIXED EXPENSES

Rent (1-bed flat)	£850
Council Tax	£120
Gas & Electric	£95
Internet	£35
Mobile Phone (iPhone contract)	£55
Car Payment (PCP)	£280
Car Insurance	£85
Gym Membership (premium gym)	£65
Total Fixed Expenses	£1,585

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Netflix	£15.99
Spotify	£10.99
Amazon Prime	£8.99
Disney+	£7.99
PlayStation Plus	£8.99
Headspace app	£9.99
Audible	£7.99
News subscription	£12.99
Total Subscriptions	£83.92

VARIABLE EXPENSES (Monthly Average)

Groceries	£320
Petrol	£160
Eating out / takeaways	£180
Coffee (daily Pret habit)	£85
Drinks with friends (weekends)	£120
Clothes shopping	£80
Haircuts / grooming	£45
Random Amazon purchases	£75
Miscellaneous	£50
Total Variable Expenses	£1,115

JAMES'S MONTHLY SUMMARY

Income: £2,700 | Total Spending: £2,783.92 | **Shortfall: -£83.92**

This is why James ends up in his overdraft every month. His spending exceeds his income by nearly £84 and that's before any unexpected expenses.

Discussion Questions for Your Wealth Pod

Work through these questions together. Write your answers below.

1. What are James's biggest money leaks?

Identify at least 5 areas where James could reduce spending without drastically changing his lifestyle:

2. Which subscriptions would you recommend James cancel or downgrade?

3. How much could James realistically save per month if he made your recommended changes?

4. What's the difference between "lifestyle creep" and genuinely needing more money?

How do you think James fell into this pattern?

5. Create a zero-based budget

Reallocate his £2,700 income so that every pound has a job. Include savings!

Category	New Budget
Rent	£
Council Tax	£
Utilities	£
Internet	£
Mobile Phone	£
Car Payment	£
Car Insurance	£
Gym	£
Subscriptions (combined)	£
Groceries	£
Petrol	£
Eating out / takeaways	£
Coffee	£
Social / drinks	£
Clothes / shopping	£
Personal care	£
Emergency Fund	£
Savings / Investments	£
Other	£
Other	£
TOTAL (should equal £2,700)	£

6. What advice would you give James about his mindset around money?

PRESENTATION PREP

Be ready to share your Wealth Pod's recommendations next Friday.
Each group will have 3-5 minutes to present their zero-based budget for James
and explain their key recommendations.