

The cost of going to university in England is rising. Tuition fees have breached the previous £9,000 a year limit, repayment terms are becoming less generous, and maintenance grants have become loans. Young people need to learn the facts fast, and explore their options, in order to make an informed choice about their future.

Student finance and budgeting are not compulsory on the National Curriculum for Sixth Formers, and many teachers lack the expertise to teach it. Our specialist financial education programme addresses these knowledge gaps, arms students with practical money management skills, and in turn, boosts their confidence. This is Uni Dosh.

Aliyah, 16



Aliyah is scared about leaving home for the first time. She hates owing money, and is apprehensive of getting into debt because of university. If it made her feel any better, she was not alone! Many of her peers express the same worries. Lots of 'firsts', like leaving home, are taking place and 'ready' was the most overheard word of the day – "I'm not ready, get ready, who's ready?!"



"I'm awful with my finances and never prioritise my money at all. I'm hoping to get some much needed advice then I can make a better decision on going to uni. I've always had the aspiration to go to but haven't had the support of confidence to definitely go." **Aliyah.**

Most of the class said they had not yet visited the Student Finance England website and felt they knew little about bursaries, scholarships and grants. Our trainers try to steer away from an 'info-dump', and instead play a multiple choice quiz to fill in the knowledge gaps. This allows us to break down the options such as hardship funds, and new maintenance loans for low-income households. Plus, we continuously signpost to sites like [Push](#) and [Scholarship Search](#), so young people can make a practical 'next step'. This section is formed around **'Money In'**, and includes other sources of income such jobs, and covers employment rights and tax obligations.

Section two, **'Money Out'**, helps Aliyah and her peers set their priorities, as they practice balancing unavoidable costs like rent with their lifestyle budgets. 'The Shopping Challenge' addresses these spending priorities as Aliyah is allocated a 'moving in' budget to furnish her first flat, with items covering specific themes: eating, sleeping, living, and gadgets. With her group, she works to spend under £1,000, choosing items they think they most want/need, and estimating the total price. Do you need the GoPro or the microwave? How much in emergency funds do you have? The kinaesthetic exercise uses maths and analytical thinking to put young people in a new world, thinking about the true cost of everyday items, their needs and wants, and what they can bring with them from home.



Finally, we examine the practical tools Aliyah will need to familiarise herself with to reset her current relationship with money. **'My Bank Balance'** examines student bank accounts, overdrafts, forms of payment, statements, debit and credit cards. We bring this to life by using real life stories, student and vox pop videos to create an action plan, topping up their knowledge with Q & A, useful websites, tools and tips.

Aliyah's verdict...

"The session was great, much better than what I expected. I found the session very productive and it's enlightened me. I'm more confident and less dubious about uni. My main fear was having to leave home and being independent. Now I feel so much more confident about university.

I particularly enjoyed the fun facts about uni life, what it will actually cost. The activities I enjoyed the most was figuring out our needs and wants, I found this really helpful. I'm going to list all the things I need to save money for right now!"

Impact

We monitor baseline and endline questionnaires to gauge what young people are learning in our workshops. After this project:

- **97%** know how student loans work.
- **97%** understand what grants, bursaries and scholarships are.
- **97%** can use a budget to help me make effective use of their money.

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