

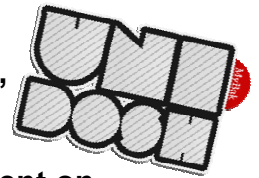
To go to university, or not? That's the £53,000 question. This year saw a 9% drop in UCAS applications and nearly half of young people think tuition fees have to be paid up front.

The fear is that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are not making informed decisions. Motiv8 is a charity working in Lambeth, where 1 in 3 youths lives in poverty. MyBnk was on hand to help youths understand and cope with the true cost of university life.

Marcus & Lewis, both 16



Architect-to-be, Marcus, and future Sports Manager, Lewis, are both financially dependent on their parents and gearing up for Sixth Form College in a few months.



The big debt figure is discussed straight away: £65K to study in London (£26K tuition fees plus £39K in living costs).

Lewis is convinced a degree is an **“unaffordable investment”** and Marcus thinks he will **“never be free of debt”**.

The pair examined the annual salary differences between a graduate and a non-graduate and discussed employers' needs. We then took them through the repayment process via the Student Finance website and specialist calculator tools. It soon dawned on the pair that while they will owe more for longer, thanks to no-upfront fees, the £21K threshold, £15K starting salary and 30 year write-off, it means they will have actually more disposable income after graduation.

This tilted Lewis' opinion. He had originally planned to do an apprenticeship in his field, however, this new information opened up new options. Income was now not such an unscalable hurdle.

Whilst the student debt figure still loomed large, we focus on the things that young people **can** control - the cost of independent living. We examine their “wiggle room”, such as the area they might live in and their spending habits.

We got down to basic money management, exploring the budgeting process step-by-step and decipher student bank statements, using real case studies and average costings.



The MyBnk Trainer also shared his university experiences. Though the fees were different, the story is the same, cash flow problems and overdrafts.

“The responsibility that comes with money is something you don't think about at this age. But there's no escaping it, I need this knowledge” Marcus.