

## **Marc: ‘Struggling to keep on my feet’**

*[Redcar, Cleveland]*

**Marc:** I wouldn’t really consider myself as poor. I would just say struggling.  
Struggling to keep on my feet.

Struggling means basically, to me, some days I have quite a bit of food, some days I don’t, but basically that’s it. Probably the things I am missing the most is probably just going out, spending time, having a decent meal with my family or taking my girlfriend out. Or even going for an ice cream on the beach, sometimes you can’t even afford that. They’re the times I really do miss.

Basically, that’s what I bought with my jobseeker’s allowance. And I’ve still had to keep money as well in case I run out during the week because I don’t know what I’ll need. I’ve learned how to budget a bit, very well during these times when I’ve been out of work and everything. You have to. Have to, to survive really. You’re not gonna get much help if you don’t know how to budget. And yeah, sure, you can borrow money and food off friends and family but eventually they’ll get sick of you and tell you to get out, get a job.

I have a mobile phone. I only put about ten pounds on every two months. If someone rings me and I haven’t got credit on my phone I usually borrow someone else’s like my Mum’s because she’s got a contract one. My clothes situation as well – I don’t really find them as everyday, well I do, an everyday necessity really because you can’t really walk around with no clothes on. But buying new ones for me, I’m not really bothered about them. I’ll take second-hand ones, passed down from the family and charity shop ones and stuff like that. I’m not bothered about them, you know they’re clothes, clothes, clothes.

I haven’t been in this house for a winter yet so I don’t really know how long the heat will last in it, just like normal body heat or how much it will cost us to pump it through the winter, but at the moment we’re just staying with jumpers on.

Christmas presents – last year I couldn't even afford to get my Mum a Christmas present cos I didn't have the money to and I felt really guilty.

It does take a lot out of you. I may not show it but it does. It's not physically, it's just in your head, it get ... cos you have to constantly think about money, constantly think about it.

Last year I had a mental breakdown in my Mum's back garden cos I couldn't hack it. I couldn't do it.

I just couldn't ... I just couldn't deal with all the stress and worrying about money and everything, I just really couldn't, all the stress from worrying about money, food on the table, heating, bills, I just couldn't do it.

The way I get through it now is just got to fight it really, just got to get through it. It's best to accept what you've got and worry about yourself and not everything else around you. Keep yourself happy and out of trouble and well fed and warm and you should be ok.

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