talk money week®

Your Business Money Health Check

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WHY THIS MATTERS

Money conversations still feel awkward for a lot of business owners, but they shouldn't. Talking openly about cash helps you make clearer decisions and avoid surprises.

This guide gives you a simple process to check the financial health of your business, understand where you stand today, and take practical steps to feel more confident over the next three months.

Whether you're worried about cashflow, paying yourself, or simply making the business more resilient, this is for you.

THE REALITY OF CASHFLOW

Revenue and profit look great on paper, but cash is what keeps the doors open.

Even strong businesses can feel pressure when:

- Customers pay late
- VAT or PAYE falls in the same week as payroll
- Big supplier payments land unexpectedly
- Pricing hasn't kept pace with costs
- Too much stock sits unsold

These aren't signs of failure, just signs you need better visibility.

Cashflow isn't about predicting every penny; it's about knowing what's coming in, what's going out, and when.

That's where a 13-week cashflow comes in.

WHY A 13-WEEK VIEW WORKS

A 13-week (approx. 3-month) forecast is the simplest and most effective way to take control of cash.

Why weekly, not monthly? **Because cash moves weekly, not monthly.**

Payroll, VAT, finance payments and supplier terms rarely line up with calendar months and a monthly forecast can hide a cash crunch in Week 3.

13 weeks is short enough to be accurate and long enough to prepare. It's also the standard format used by banks, funders and turnaround specialists because it answers the key question:
Can the business pay its bills over the next quarter?

A 13-week forecast only needs:

- Opening balance
- Expected money in
- Expected money out
- Closing balance

Update weekly.
Roll forward another week each time.
This becomes your early-warning system — not a spreadsheet that gathers dust.

GETTING CASH IN FASTER

Most SMEs don't have a sales problem; they have a slow-cash-in problem. You might be owed thousands but it's stuck with customers instead of in your bank

A few simple changes can transform your cash position quickly.

Invoice promptly
Send invoices immediately, not "when you get a minute."

Take deposits
For new work, request 30–50% upfront to cover early delivery costs.

Stage billing
Split work into start / mid-point / completion to speed up collection.

Automate reminders
Most accounting platforms can send reminders before and after due dates.

Talk to late payers
Polite phone calls often unlock payment faster than emails.

Keep payment terms tight
Shorter terms mean faster cash.

PAYING YOURSELF PROPERLY

One of the most common questions business owners ask is: How much can I safely take out?

There's no universal number.
It starts with two realities:

1. What you need personally
2. What the business can actually support

Your business should be able to pay:

- Staff
- Suppliers
- Tax set-asides
- Loan payments
- A reasonable buffer

If paying yourself puts pressure on any of these, the problem isn't you, **it's the structure.**

The answer might be:

- Better pricing
- Faster payment terms
- A different salary/dividend mix
- A clearer draw strategy

The goal is to pay yourself confidently without starving the business of oxygen.

YOUR TEAM & MONEY

Money stress affects performance.

If your team are worried about their finances, focus and morale suffer.

You don’t need expensive programmes to help, small actions make a big difference.

You can:

- Explain payslips & tax codes clearly
- Run a 20-minute “how pensions work” session
- Signpost budgeting and debt help
- Encourage honest, judgement-free conversations

Supporting financial wellbeing creates a more resilient culture which ultimately strengthens your business.

YOUR 30–60–90 DAY PLAN

A simple three-month structure to improve cash, confidence & clarity.

Next 30 days — Stabilise

- Build your 13-week cash forecast
- Automate invoice reminders
- Tighten terms for new work
- Review pricing on top services
- Map upcoming VAT & PAYE dates

Days 31–60 — Improve

- Clear or bundle slow-moving stock
- Speak with suppliers on terms
- Update staged billing where appropriate
- Re-evaluate profitability by service

Days 61–90 — Strengthen

- Review collection performance
- Reduce discounting
- Review pricing wider
- Lock in weekly cash reviews
- Build a quarterly planning rhythm

By the end of 90 days, most businesses report:

- Better visibility
- Faster cash collection
- Fewer fire-drills around payments
- Stronger pricing confidence

Want to know more?
Let’s talk

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