



Credit Union Newsletter Summer 2020

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Keeping Safe, Staying Open through Covid 19

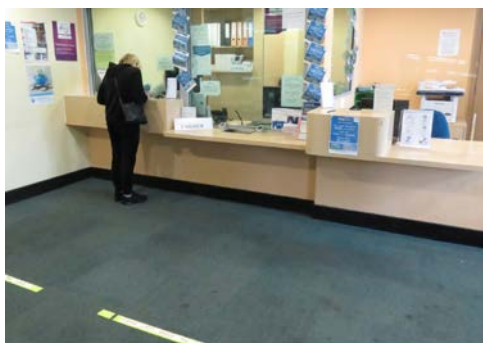
Lewisham Plus Credit Union had to move quickly to protect staff and members when Covid-19 lockdown began. We are a designated “Key Service”, so have done everything we can to maintain service safely.

We have completed adjustments to protect safety, such as Perspex screens, distancing and sanitiser.



Our branches are open, but with reduced days in Bromley and no Friday evening in Sydenham. New Cross Learning library is closed until lockdown is eased further.

We established an emergency crisis team from the outset, which met 2-3 times per week to develop and implement policy and safety changes. We quickly adopted virtual meetings for staff and for the board.



Nine of our staff needed to self-isolate at home at short notice and two who were unable to work were furloughed. We brought in three temporary staff to fill gaps in our branch operations. We also set up home working using credit union computers borrowed from branches.



Member footfall was reduced, but with an increase in telephone and email contacts and online loan applications. The number of new members joining the credit union, many of whom come through our branches, has been markedly reduced due to the lockdown.

We implemented changes to our computer software and introduced procedures to offer ‘**Emergency Payment Freezes**’ in line with the official guidance issued in March. Around 50 of our members have used this facility to ease cash flow.

From March we saw an immediate and large reduction in the value of loans compared with our trend. The number of loans was similar to the same period in 2019. In June we saw the first signs of a recovery, though with some way to go. Saving has increased by over £1m to June.

There was an initial surge in local emergency support loans, but this is now back to a normal level.

The board is particularly grateful to our amazing staff who, throughout the crisis, have demonstrated a can-do attitude and a willingness to maintain services to members in the face of significant challenges.

£5,000 Prize Saver Top Prize Winner

Huge congratulations to Sammy Joanne Taylor, our first £5,000 Prize Saver winner. PrizeSaver is free, but time-limited. (see inside for details)

Sam said “*Join the credit union if you are not a member, it is a great place to save and borrow. Sign up to the Prize Saver account, it is free! I normally never win anything and if I can win, anyone can. I have greatly benefitted by being a member even before the win and after the win I am lost for words.*”

She plans to use her winnings wisely, but the first thing will be to buy her daughter a computer to help her with home schooling whilst she is at home because of coronavirus.



Even before the win, Sam had a really good experience with the credit union. She used one of our Save As You Borrow loans to help with Christmas, whilst saving at the same time, for the first time. Her savings allowed her to open a Prize Saver account.

She also commented: “*What I love about LPCU is that all staff are very friendly, knowledgeable and helpful. The knowledge they have gives me the confidence to save with the credit union. Even if they don’t know me, all the staff make me feel like they know me.*”



Lending Decisions

Lewisham Plus approves around 6,000 loan applications each year. We have been using Experian's Automated Lending Decisions tool to help us with credit risk assessment and decisions since 2013, but this is being retired in September 2020.

We developed a specification for the replacement system and invited four tenders in January. The winner was Incuto, who we were already using for their mobile app services.



We have been setting up credit decision rules in the new system, and are now submitting monthly credit information to TransUnion (formerly Call Credit) as well as to Experian. We will use TransUnion with the new system, as they provide more complete credit history for many of our members. Though members won't see any immediate change to services, this is a big change for our staff and a major step forward for the credit union.

Loan Applications

We will soon be launching a new, easy to use online loan application, initially for use by our existing members via the Incuto app.

How much would you like to apply for?

1 2 3 4 5 6 X

Click Here For TOP UP Loans

Product Type.*

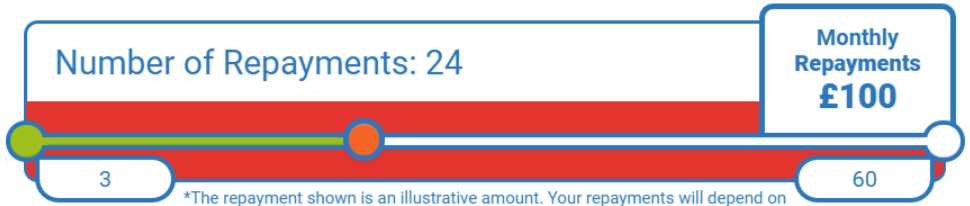
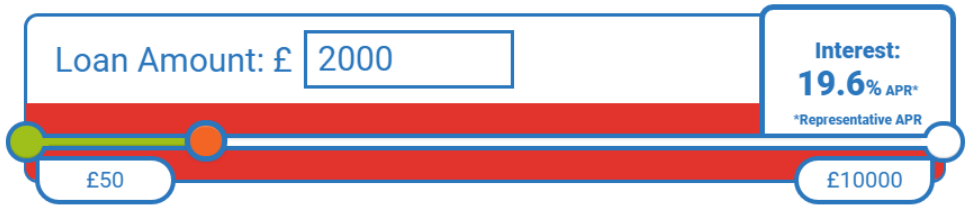
Please Select

Loan Products

Personal Loan Application

Save as you Borrow Loan Level 1

Save as you Borrow Loan Level 2



*The repayment shown is an illustrative amount. Your repayments will depend on the date of your first repayment.

When this is ready for new members it will refresh and improve the joining process, and make it easier and safer to apply for a loan. There will be several benefits for members:

- Easy to use loan application
- Online ID & address checking
- Anti-fraud controls
- Open banking option to speed up loan affordability decisions where bank account details are provided
- Electronic signature for loans

We are hoping to launch e-signing for loan agreements ahead of the full application. During Covid-19 we have been aware that this would help members stay safe, as well as being more convenient, reducing the need to travel to sign for loans.

Unfortunately it isn't as simple as just turning it on. After a couple of months getting ready, e-signing should be available very soon.



Fairbanking Mark

Lewisham Plus has asked the Fairbanking Foundation to assess the quality and positive financial impact of our **Save as you Borrow** and **Personal Loan** products. Some

members will be receiving a survey run by the respected Ipsos Mori organisation as part of this assessment.

The Fairbanking Foundation is a charity dedicated to encouraging and helping financial providers to improve the financial well-being of their customers and the UK public.

Recommended to join the credit union



"After being recommended getting a credit union savings account by a friend I finally did last year.

I pay money each week into it and because it's separate from my main bank account I found it really easy to save. Before I knew it I had £600 saved!

I've never been able to save and having a weekly standing order has changed this and will help me for a rainy day. It also helps that my local credit union always has a friendly face who's always helpful."

Naomi Saunders, July 2020.

"Just a quick note to say thank you for the services that you offer. Would also like to say that the service and advice that I have received over the phone and face to face have been very good. Please carry on keeping it simple and sensible."

Francis John Stokes, March 2020

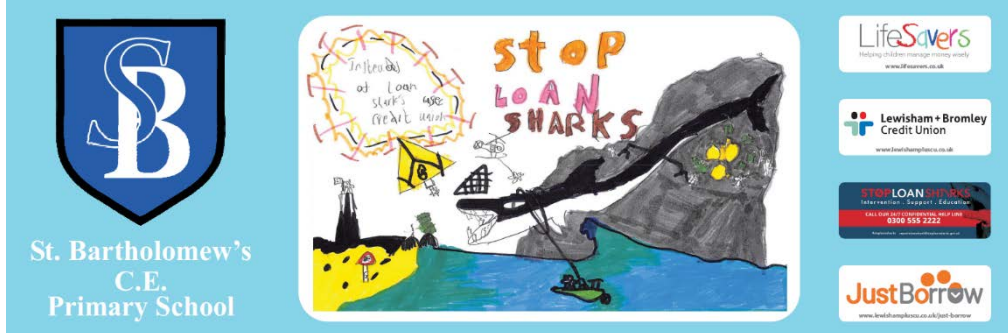
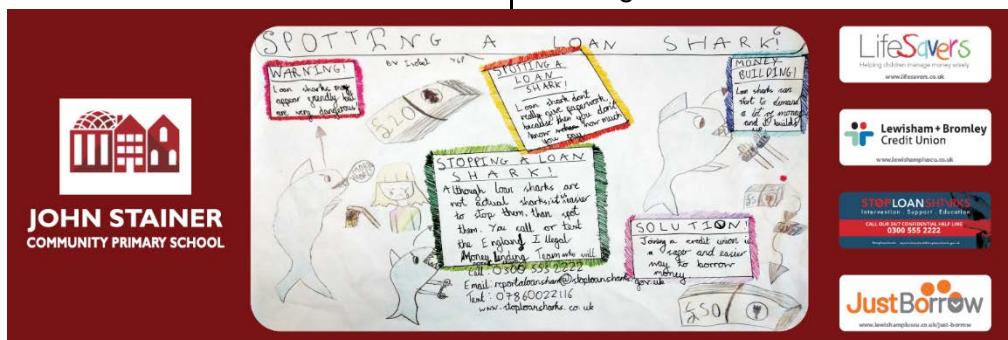
Thank you both for your kind words, and for recommending the credit union to others as well.



Loan Shark Banners

Our LifeSaver primary school credit union teams have been busy creating artwork to raise awareness about loan sharks. Three of the best

are shown here. Seven winning entries were turned into banners, and the schools also received a small cash prize. The competition was supported by the Illegal Money Lending Team and Lifesavers.



Fair4All Grant Award



Fair4All Finance is a not for profit organisation created by the government to use funds from dormant accounts to fund financial inclusion initiatives.

In April, shortly after the start of the Covid-19 crisis, they launched a fund to assist organisations, such as credit unions, to manage the financial impacts of the crisis. Lewisham Plus was successful in our bid and received £100,000 to help the credit union to mitigate certain impacts such as reduced lending and higher rates of default. Our thanks go to this organisation for their generosity which will greatly assist us over the year ahead.

Get more involved - Join our Board?

We are a member-led organisation, and we are looking for members who are interested in joining our Board, either now or in the future.

You could help shape the direction of the Credit Union, gain valuable experience, and enjoy being a bigger part of our organisation. If you would like to find out more about this opportunity, please get in touch with our CEO, Ravi Ravindran by email (ceo@pluscu.co.uk) or telephone (020 8778 4738).

In line with a core Board objective on diversity, we particularly welcome applications from women and BAME member, both groups currently under-represented on our Board.

PrizeSaver

The credit union savings account with monthly prizes

PrizeSaver is a new instant access savings account that can also win prizes each month. HM Treasury is providing a prize draw, on a trial basis, until March 2021.

Only available for a limited time

How much can I save?

£1 will give you one chance to win each month. Every extra £1 will give you a further chance to win, up to a maximum of £200.

You can save regularly, or you can transfer savings from another account. Your savings may also qualify for an annual dividend (if a dividend is approved at our AGM).

What can I win?

HM Treasury operate a free monthly prize draw, with a **main prize of at least £5,000 and twenty or more prizes not less than £20**. HM Treasury may increase the amount or number of the prizes, and may arrange additional draws.

Winners are selected via a randomised computer process.

If you win a headline prize, we will contact you and you will then need to let us know where to pay the prize. Smaller prizes will be paid into your PrizeSaver account directly.

How can I apply?

There is a downloadable application form and full T&Cs on our website www.pluscu.co.uk/prizesaver-account Check from time to time to read notices and for any changes to the account terms and conditions.

You need to be over 18 and resident in England, Wales or Scotland.



Credit Union Services

www.engageaccount.com



Members using Engage current account and pre-paid cards have a new digital banking app that went live on 18th May 2020.

Any member who hasn't yet downloaded the Engage app can do so free by visiting their app store or www.engageaccount.com

Key benefits of the new Engage digital banking app include:

- Real time balance and transaction information
- Instant app notification when funds are received, bills paid, etc.
- Pay bills and manage standing orders or direct debits in the app
- Simple budgeting tools – set up envelopes on your phone and never miss a bill payment!
- Pay cash in via PayPoint (and Post Office – coming shortly)
- Pay with Google Pay, Samsung Pay and Apple Pay
- Contactless payments
- Cash-back or ATM service*

JustBorrow

Our affordable, ethical alternative to Payday loans. Our £750 loan over 6 months would cost **£998 less** than a Payday loan at 1250%.

(Representative example: £750 over 6 months, £140.28 monthly repayment, £841.70 total repayment. APR 42.6%)

Successful applicants can borrow from £100 to £750 for between three and nine months. The online-only application process is quick and involves completing a short form, following which an instant decision is made where possible. There is an option to request a fast payment and have the money paid in a few hours.

For more information please visit: <https://www.justborrow.co.uk/cu/lewishamplus>

Existing members may apply for a Just Borrow loan if they don't have other current loans with Lewisham Plus Credit Union. *To qualify you need to receive a regular income and have a reasonable credit rating.*

Branch Contacts & Hours

Reduced hours for Covid-19

262 Kirkdale, Sydenham,
London, SE26 4RS
Tel: 0208 778 4738

Open 9.30am-1pm Mon-Fri and
10am-noon Saturday

The Green Man at 355 Bromley
Road, Catford, SE6 2RP
Tel: 0208 461 4721

Open 9.30am-1pm Mon-Fri

Bromley Plus at 54 Cotmandene
Cres. St.Paul's Cray, BR5 2RG
Tel: 0208 302 1541

Open 9.30am-1pm Tue/Thu.

New Cross Learning, 283-5
New Cross Road, SE14 6AS
(Awaiting library re-opening)

Closed Bank holidays and as per
notices on our website.

Use our App

Our Incuto app will allow you to look up saving and loans transactions, request transfers or to send funds to your designated bank account. If you make your request by 1pm the money will be in your bank by 5pm on the same business day.



Search for **Incuto** on the Apple or Android store and select *Lewisham Plus Credit Union* to sign-up.

Or manage online

View recent transactions online in our Members' area and approve money transfers (Web PIN required)

Follow on social media

LPCU's Facebook page (**Lewisham + Bromley**) has over 750 followers enjoying daily posts covering topics ranging from serious articles about financial inclusion, competitions, local community events, offers and education to things that are just plain fun.



You can help us get to our target of 1000 likes if you **LIKE Lewisham + Bromley Credit Union** on Facebook then **SHARE** with your friends.

Grow your savings

Save up to £30,000, £3 joining fee for adults, no fee for young savers.

To protect your funds, we require proof of ID for all withdrawals.

Dormant accounts under £10 balance - annual £2.50 fee (adult and junior accounts)

Corporate Accounts

Deposit account available for local associations, clubs and charities.

Free Life Insurance included

Members up to age 70 receive up to £1,000 life insurance on savings, at no charge. Loans are covered up to £5,000 for members up to age 79.**

**All insurances subject to policy limits

Loans for members

Email fasttrack@pluscu.co.uk to request top-ups for existing loans

Personal Loans up to £10,000 from 0.75% to 2%pm (9.4% to 26.8% APR).

Loyalty Saver Loan 0.5%pm/6.2% APR, for members who can secure the whole loan against their savings.

SAYB Loan 2% to 3%pm (26.8% to 42.6% APR), save as you borrow, with reduced APR if you qualify for an SAYB level 2 loan over £800.

Household Goods Loan up to £500 extra for existing borrowers, at the same APR rate as SAYB loans.

Engage Ethical Card Services

Low cost prepaid Visa debit card, £2 per month, no load fees.*

Smartcash electronic pocket money for 8-16s. £10 one off (may be waived under our offer), no monthly fee.*

Engage Current Account Card service £5.95 per month*

*See full Terms and Conditions for details.

Balance Enquiries

Text **Balance** to **07537 410334**

The text will cost your standard network rate for an SMS. If you don't get a response, email admin@pluscu.co.uk with your name, member number and mobile phone number.

We strive to promote financial inclusion and to be the trusted and preferred provider of local financial services in Lewisham and Bromley.

Our individual and approachable service is volunteer led but professionally managed.

We exist for you and because of you.