

Case Study 5

Michael & Rachel



I'm Michael, I'm 22 and I'm a plasterer. I'm renting with my girlfriend Rachel in Galway. She's 22 as well. The rent is €700 per month and between the two of us we manage it. Running a house is expensive. We have a lot of bills to pay. Every month we spend €20 each on our mobiles, the TV licence is €13.33, TV provider €23, Electricity costs at least €40 and Rachel has Hire Purchase payments on her car every month of €160. We'd usually spend €120 on food every week.

My work is fairly steady but sometimes I've gaps of a week or two when I've nothing on. On average, I'd say I pull in about €400 a week. Rachel and myself are pooling our money so it helps that she has regular work in a reception in a busy hotel in the city centre. She's working full time and takes home €350 a week.

I think we have a great future together. First of all we're both working and second we've been together since school. We've been talking about getting married but we know that weddings can be really expensive. We're going to start saving properly so we can get married in about two years. We think the wedding could cost about €20,000 but we're hoping that our parents can help us out. If we add that to gifts, we might only need to cover half the expense from our savings.

After a lot of hard work Rachel has finally cleared her credit card and she now only uses it for emergencies. We won't be using it to pay for our wedding.

Once we're married, we'd like to buy our own house. We've started to think about what we need to do to prepare for it.

I need to drive for my work so I have a car and Rachel has one too. She actually walks to work (the hotel is close by) so she's thinking of selling her car. The thing is, she bought it on Hire Purchase and she's not sure what her situation is. Does she own the car? How much does she have to pay back to the Hire Purchase company? She thinks she'll save a lot on petrol, tax and insurance bills even if she doesn't make much selling the car. Our motor insurance bills are steep at €1,500 for the two cars. The tax is another €650. I'd say we spend €70 each week between us on petrol.

Rachel has always had a bank account but I've never had one. Rachel thinks that it would be easier for us to pay bills, pool our money and save if we open a joint account so I'm going to visit the bank and do that with her.

