

# COMMSAVE

Friendly • Ethical • Professional  
Helping you afford life



## Summer 2023

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reward yourself

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The easy way to save, the better way to borrow

hello@commsave.co.uk 0303 0402 660 commsave.co.uk



Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the  
Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority (213407)



## You're invited!

Take part in shaping the future of your community and contribute to the positive growth of your Credit Union by attending our online **Special General Meeting on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> of July**. The purpose of the meeting is to consider some changes to our common bond, as we seek to expand the number of partner companies offering employees the chance to save direct from pay.

Enclosed within this newsletter is the official notice of the meeting, with information on how to register to attend.

**Help  
decide the  
direction of  
your Credit  
Union!**

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*Authorised by the Prudential  
Regulation Authority and  
regulated by the Financial  
Conduct Authority and the  
Prudential Regulation Authority  
(FRN 213407).*

*commsave.co.uk*

## Guess what's back and **better than ever?**

We've decided to bring back our Referral Prize Draw after popular demand, so, if you didn't win the first-time around, now's your chance to **win £1,000!**

**Refer as many eligible colleagues, friends, and family members as you like via the link on our mobile app, and you'll get a prize draw ticket for each one that completes the membership sign up process!**

As we said at our last AGM, if every existing member recruits just one new member we'll double in size in no time!

The competition runs until Friday 1st September 2023.

Once all the tickets have been finalised the winner will be selected through an electronic draw and announced on our Facebook page.

Don't miss this chance to win big and indulge in that holiday in the sun, upgrade those wheels, or boost your savings account!

## Who can become a **member?**

Anyone in one of the following groups can become a member with Commsave:

- Royal Mail Group
- Post Office Ltd
- Members of UNITE the Union
- The UK Government Civil Service
- Pall-Ex Group
- Anyone living or working in the NN postcodes
- People working in the fishing industry
- Family members at the same address as you, and many more!

Go to the 'Who Can Join' section under the 'About' menu on our website or scan the QR code to see the full list



## We're coming for you, CSL!

We'll be attending Civil Service Live in both London and Manchester this summer!

We love attending CSL and always speak to hundreds of civil servants during the events.

Keep an eye out for our stand and pop over and say hello if you're going!

**Manchester - catch us at stand C8 + C9 on the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023.**

**London - catch us at stand D10 + D12 on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> July 2023.**



## Meet our new Business Development Officer!

Meet Trudi, our new Business Development Officer, who has been with us since April and is already making a huge difference to our team, as we seek to grow our membership! We're thrilled to have her on board.

With her enthusiasm and knowledge, Trudi is working with employers large and small, all over the country, to explain the benefits of saving direct from pay to help employees achieve financial wellbeing.

If you're interested in your employer being the next to partner with us, we'd love to hear from you!

Contact Trudi today on **01604 973992**, email her at **trudibrown@commsave.co.uk**, or go to **commsave.co.uk/partners**.



## Fancy a guaranteed return on your savings?

We recently launched a new Fixed Rate Cash ISA – offering a **guaranteed return on savings of 3.5%** until 5th April 2025.

Anyone who was a Commsave member on 1st April 2023 is eligible to apply to open one of the new ISAs.

Go to **commsave.co.uk/savings/fixed-rate-isa** for more information to help you decide whether this is the right investment opportunity for you.

## No matter the circumstances, we're here to help

The cost of living continues to present real problems for many of us. With inflation rates running well above 8%, and energy prices still well up on where they were a few years ago, it remains a challenge to make ends meet.

We want to make sure you have the information you need to make the best possible choices where your money is concerned.

Remember, we're here to help. If you need any support with any aspect of your Commsave account, please let us know. Our friendly Member Services team are here to help – call us on **0303 0402 660** between 9am and 5pm, Mondays to Fridays, and between 9am and 1pm on Saturdays.

If you need support managing your borrowing commitments with us, we can put you in touch with our Member Solutions team. They have various options available to help you keep on top of your debts, so let us know if you're experiencing any difficulties.

Our CURight website (see next page) offers a range of articles and tools to help keep you informed. Registration is available free of charge to all Commsave members.



You might also find these other online resources useful:

1

**moneysavingexpert.com** – provides you with the tools, tips, and resources to save money on anything from groceries to flights, and even mortgage deals.

2

**debtcamel.co.uk** – helps you achieve financial freedom! With tools and strategies to understand, manage, and reduce your debt, you'll be back on track in no time!

3

**citizensadvice.org.uk** – provides free, confidential advice for all your money and banking worries, from budgeting and credit cards to benefits and consumer rights.

4

**moneyhelper.org.uk** – Get tips and advice on budgeting, savings, and more to help you get your finances back on track.

If there's a resource you know of that you think would help other members, why not share them on our Facebook page? We have a thread of useful links, and we'd love to hear your suggestions!

## Are you keeping up with CURight?

A range of new articles have just been released on our platform dedicated to financial wellbeing, ranging from how you can **reduce the cost of your daily commute**, to helping you **decide whether it's cheaper for you to work from home during the cost-of-living crisis**.

The website also provides access to practical financial tools, such as a budget planner, to assist you in making plans for the big events of life. Not to mention a wide range of different articles with tips and tricks to help you manage your money better.

The site is open to all Commsave members – simply register on the site using the e-mail address on your Commsave account. Go to **CURight.co.uk** to register and get free access to the full site.

## We want your opinion!

As we're rapidly expanding, we want to make sure our articles are accessible and relatable. What articles would you like to see on CURight in future?

Email us at **events@commsave.co.uk** with your suggestions.

The screenshot displays the CURight website interface. On the left, a navigation menu lists various financial topics: Home, Borrowing, Budgeting, Dealing with Debt, Increasing Income, Insurance, Life Events, Saving, All Articles, and Useful Tools. A 'JOIN COMMSAVE' button is also present. The main content area features several article cards:

- Reducing the cost of your commute**: Accompanied by an image of a train, with a 'Read more' link.
- What's my Money Motivation?**: Includes the text 'Take our interactive test now to gain unique insights into your money make up.' and a 'TAKE IT NOW' button.
- Money trouble? Find out who to speak to...**: A call to action with the text 'Need help knowing who to contact for help, use our handy contact tool.' and a 'CONTACT GUIDE' button.
- We need to talk about prepaid funeral plans**: With a 'Read more' link.
- Is it really cheaper to work from home?**: With a 'Read more' link.
- New Year, New Start? Take control of your money in 2023!**: With a 'Read more' link.
- Worried you might run out of credit on your prepayment meter...?**: With a 'Read more' link.

The footer of the page displays 'commsave.co.uk Summer 2023 5'.

# The results are in...

Back in April, we sent out our annual member survey. We were delighted to receive more than 1,100 responses, and we'd like to say a big thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey.

The feedback we receive is invaluable in helping us to understand how we can best serve our members and enables us to identify improvements we can make.

Here are the key findings from this year's survey.

**95%** of members are satisfied with their membership of Commsave!

↑ 2% from last year

**98%** of members would recommend Commsave to a work colleague or family member.

↑ 1% from last year

**94%** of members were satisfied with the process of applying for a loan with us.

↑ 1% from last year

**93%** of members rated the speed of our telephone contact centre answering their calls as either excellent or very good.

↑ 2% from last year



Each year, we hold a business planning weekend, where our staff, directors, and members of the Audit and Risk Sub-Committee get together to discuss our future development.

An important part of this planning process is taking on-board the feedback and suggestions made by members in our annual survey.

We take the time to read all the individual comments we receive – a selection of these are shown opposite.



## Here are some of your suggestions and what we're doing about them.

"Can Commsave introduce a credit card for members?"

Lots of members made this suggestion and we understand the greater flexibility and service this would provide. We're delighted to say we're working on a plan to offer credit cards. Watch this space for more information!

Would Commsave ever consider offering an account with a guaranteed return?

This is something that several members asked us. We've recently launched a new Fixed Rate Cash ISA to members who joined on or before 1st April 2023. **This account is paying a guaranteed rate of 3.5% until 5th April 2025.** Check out our website or call us on **0303 0402 660** if you would like more information about this product.

It would be good if the savings interest rate would increase.

Given the increase in interest rates in the wider economy in recent times, lots of members wanted to know about our future dividend rates. As the dividends are paid retrospectively – subject to the level of surplus Commsave makes – we're not able to advertise the return members may receive. However, please be assured that the board and staff are all working tirelessly to deliver the best possible results for the current financial year, with a view to ensuring we can provide you with a competitive dividend at the time of our next Annual General Meeting, in January 2024.

Can you offer mortgages?

This is something that is still very much part of our planned development. However, given the current volatility in the market, particularly in terms of interest rates, we've taken the decision to prioritise the delivery of credit cards for members. We'll revisit our plans for mortgages in 2024.

I'm new to Commsave and still don't understand all the benefits of it.

Firstly, thank you for becoming a member! You can find details of all the products and services we offer, as well as our unique membership benefits (such as our Bereavement Fund) on our website at **commsave.co.uk**. If you have any questions about anything we do, or you'd like any help applying for our products, please get in touch with our friendly team on **0303 0402 660**.

The  
winner  
of our £250  
prize draw was  
Katrina Baker  
of Birkenhead!

# Supporting what matters to you

Our Community Fund has now made donations totalling more than £20,000 since being launched in the summer of 2022.

We've helped a wide range of good causes, including various charities, projects for young people, and community ventures.

## Get your dancing shoes on!

Northamptonshire charity and social enterprise Teamwork Trust works with autistic adults, people with learning disabilities, and individuals with mental health needs.

It's the charity's 40th birthday this year and they're seeking to raise £40,000 to mark the occasion. To help raise funds, Teamwork organised a charity line dance on 2nd June. To

ensure that Teamwork could keep 100% of the value of the ticket sales for the event, Commsave made a donation to cover the costs of catering for the evening.

James Richards and Trudi Brown from Commsave, visited Teamwork to present them with the donation, and were delighted to meet with staff and service users, and to learn more about the charity's activities.



Judy Caine, Fundraising Executive, for Teamwork, said "thank you for your generous donation and for finding the time to come and visit us. Our service users were most amused by the somewhat larger than life cheque you bought with you!"

Here are some other wonderful causes we've recently donated to:

### **Manchester Central Foodbank**

Part of a nationwide network of foodbanks, supported by the Trussell Trust, working to combat poverty and hunger across the UK. We made a contribution through the Community Fund in March this year, during our visit to Manchester for the annual national credit union conference.

### **Lewis Foundation**

This charity sources, packages, and hand delivers free gifts and support packs to adult cancer patients in 17 hospitals, spread across the Midlands, every week – items they might find difficult to buy themselves or simply cannot afford. We were pleased to support them with a contribution to cover the purchase of 500 new packs.

### **Duston Eldean Primary School**

The Community Fund agreed a donation to support the purchase of books for the school library. Paula Page, English Lead at the school, said "reading is essential for every child's success, and supplying rich, engaging texts is a priority in our school. We are using this generous donation to introduce more non-fiction and diverse books."

**Remember,  
25p from every  
£1 entry to the  
Commsave lottery  
goes towards  
the Community  
Fund!**

**Join the  
lottery today  
by logging in  
to your online  
account**

## The Gambia Trust

Mick, who is a retired Royal Mail worker, first visited The Gambia eight years ago and wanted to take some gifts to a community school that wasn't receiving any help or assistance from other charities.

A friend of Mick's, who lives in The Gambia, recommended the AVI school in Brufut and, after several visits taking gifts, he ended up raising enough funds to build them a new school with electricity and running water.

The Gambia is one of the World's poorest countries. There is chronic under provision of pre-school places (38%) and most of the schools are poor quality. The Gambia School Support (GSS) charity has no overheads - every single penny is spent in The Gambia.

In 2018, Mick made an incredible impact for the new AVI School project and was able to raise over £6,000!

This year, he and his team took recreational gifts and stationery to the Brufut Early Childhood Development Centre, which accommodates up to 200 children, aged four to seven years old. We were pleased to be able to support Mick's efforts, with a contribution towards a range of outdoor games equipment.

The GSS provides the school with basic necessary education and ensures that each child receives a basic nutritious meal - which is why the team mainly take recreational gifts the charities could not be expected to provide.

During their recent trip, they took two basketball posts, two football goals, two bags of footballs, outdoor games such as the large Connect 4, skipping ropes, different coloured sports bibs, hoops, and a large box of different types of assorted stationery. They also took three laptop computers for the teachers but also in hopes they can be shared in the wider community to offer adult learning.



**We want to hear about the causes that matter most to you. To find out more about the Community Fund, or to make an application, scan the QR code or go to [commsave.co.uk/community-fund](https://commsave.co.uk/community-fund).**



## A much needed tonic

**Rita has been a member of Commsave since 1995 and is one of our most recent Facebook competition winners. She is also a long-time supporter of Northampton Town Football Club – the Cobblers – and has kindly shared her story.**

I have been a member of the Credit Union since it started when I was working at Barrack Road on the old code desk machines. I heard about it while on overtime one day and thought... that's probably the only way I'm ever going to save up for anything like a new washing machine or if the car broke down. It was like a comfort blanket for me when my children were still small.

I would recommend it to anyone. I've convinced a few work colleagues over the years to join and they have never looked back either.

I was medically retired from Royal Mail but I have kept the Credit Union going, I still like my 'comfort blanket' should the unexpected happen!

Rita recently won our Facebook giveaway for a signed Northampton Town shirt, following their promotion to League One. After hearing her story – it couldn't have gone to a more worthy winner!

"I've been a season ticket holder at Sixfields for years. I don't miss many games at home but, unfortunately, I am unable to get to away games anymore due to caring for my husband as he can't be left for too long.

I missed the final two home games of the season. My seat was in row 'Q' in the west stand which was great for watching the games, but I'd been struggling with the steps up to the seat.

I didn't quite realise how poorly I was getting. I'd been to the GP a few times explaining my fatigue, sore and weak muscles but they seemed to ignore me. I had been diagnosed with a liver problem, so put my symptoms down to that. As the weeks progressed, I realised I was getting weaker, and simply couldn't manage the steps at Sixfields anymore. I was upset as we were having such a brilliant season and didn't want to miss those games.



For the final game at home vs Bradford, the club kindly arranged for me to enter via the side gate and take up a seat at the front. Unfortunately, after a blood test, I received a call from the GP telling me to get to the hospital immediately.

I was admitted for 10 days in the 'Walter Tull' ward at Northampton General Hospital and had to settle for listening to that final game on the radio.

My advice to anyone out there on Statins for high cholesterol - please don't ignore fatigue or sore, achy, weak muscles. Insist on a Creatine Kinase blood test. It can affect the heart and the kidneys if the CK levels are too high for too long. I was told the CK shouldn't be over 100 and mine at the worst was 4778! I'm awaiting my CT scan results and am still struggling with everyday things I took for granted.

When you called to tell me I had won the framed, signed shirt I was ecstatic to say the least. It came at a time when I really needed something to cheer me up and you did that for sure!"



## It's time to get pro-active about your health.

We understand how difficult it can be to get an appointment with your GP. Struggling with your mental and physical well-being is hard, and you don't have to do it alone. Fortunately, there are lots of useful online resources to help you.

- **NHS** - Learn about thousands of illnesses, symptoms, and treatments so you can make informed decisions on the road to recovery - [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk)
- **Mind** - From understanding symptoms to finding support, Mind can help you learn to be kinder to yourself and make the best decisions for your mental health - [mind.org.uk](https://www.mind.org.uk)
- **BritishRedCross** - Wellbeing Support is a free helpline available to anyone in the UK who is feeling lonely, isolated, or in need of emotional support - [redcross.org.uk](https://www.redcross.org.uk)
- **The Children's Society** - This website has a range of downloadable activities, resources, and advice to help young people with their mental health - [childrenssociety.org.uk](https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk)

Last year as part of our partnership with NTFC, we were able to offer free health checks to Northamptonshire members. If you live in Northamptonshire, and are interested in a free health check, let us know. We'll be more than happy to arrange more dates.

**If you think you need medical help right now, NHS 111 can tell you what to do next. Remember, you should call 999 in a life-threatening emergency only.**

# More than just savings and loans

Did you know we offer a whole host of unique membership benefits? We offer a Bereavement Fund, a Community Fund, and the opportunity to be involved in the democracy of our Credit Union, including standing for election to the Board of Directors.

## Bereavement Fund

Any savings you have with us, and any loan you take from us, are protected by our Bereavement Fund, at no cost to you, giving you peace of mind without any added expense. The protection means that, in the event of your death, the Fund will pay off any outstanding Commsave loan you have and pay a lump sum into your savings to help your nominated beneficiary.

## Community Fund

Our Community Fund exists to make donations for good causes - either for organisations that members support - or for fundraising activities that members are taking part in themselves. 25% of our lottery ticket sales each month is given to the fund.

## Member owned & run

Commsave is led by a board of volunteer directors who are all members - just like you. This means members have a direct say in how the organisation is run.

Perhaps you have the time and skills to become a volunteer director yourself?

The board invites nominations to be submitted before each Annual General Meeting. The board strongly encourages anyone considering standing for election as a director to contact us to discuss the role and the process to be approved as a director.

Want  
more info?  
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touch

See the  
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website



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