



FEE-FREE BANK ACCOUNTS

Nine major banks launched fee-free basic bank accounts from 1 January 2016. The banks and building societies that have signed up to offer a basic bank account and their corresponding bank account product are:

- **Barclays** – Barclays Basic Current Account
- **Santander** – Basic Current Account
- **NatWest** – Foundation Account
- **RBS England & Wales** – Basic Account
- **HSBC** – Basic Bank Account
- **Nationwide** – FlexBasic
- **Co-operative Bank** – Cashminder
- **Lloyds Banking Group** (including Halifax and Bank of Scotland brands) – Basic Account
- **TSB** – Cash Account
- **Post Office** - Standard Account

The terms of the agreement make clear that the accounts should be made available where people are ineligible for a bank's standard current account and either:

- ✓ *have no bank account;*
- ✓ *have a bank account elsewhere, but want to change provider; or*
- ✓ *have a bank account, but are in financial difficulty and want their bank to open a new, functional account for them.*

The accounts are truly fee-free and will help people to manage their money without fear of running up an overdraft. The new basic bank accounts end bank charges if a direct debit or standing order fails and remove the risk that basic bank account customers will be forced into overdraft because of fees and charges. The accounts are also available to un-discharged bankrupts.

New basic bank account customers can access all the standard over-the-counter services at bank branches and at the Post Office, and can access the entire ATM network. Existing basic bank account customers should ask their bank whether they are eligible for a new basic bank account.

Customers who have another current account and wish to open a basic bank account should contact their bank in the first instance to find out if they are eligible. Alternatively, customers may contact any of the other nine participating banks.