

Basic bank accounts

What you can do with a basic bank account

You can use a basic bank account to receive money and pay bills. A basic bank account may be a good option if you have been turned down for a current account.

Basic bank accounts are very simple, they do not provide a cheque book or overdraft, however with most accounts you can:

- have wages, salary, benefits, pensions and tax credits paid straight into your account
- pay cheques in for free (as long as they are not in foreign currency) – funds are cleared after 6 working days
- get money out over the counter or from a cashpoint machine
- pay your bills by direct debit or standing order
- pay money in over the counter
- check your account balance over the counter or at a cashpoint machine
- Some accounts will also give you a debit card.

Are they completely free of charge?

No- With some accounts there may be a fee if you have direct debits going out or try to make debit card payments when you do not have money in the account. You will be charged an 'unpaid transaction fee' at up to £15 a time. It is therefore important that you know exactly what money you have in the account, and manage it carefully.

Can anyone open a basic bank account?

Yes- Apart from a couple of exceptions, anyone can get a basic account. They are particularly designed for people with poor credit scores, who will not pass the credit check for standard bank accounts.

However, you do not have to have credit problems to open a basic bank account. If you want an account to help you manage your money which will not allow you go overdrawn, you can also opt for one.

You will need to provide some form of identification (proof of identity and address) to open a basic bank account - if you do not have that, you might be rejected.

Exceptions

The only people who can not have a basic bank account are people with criminal convictions for fraud or people who fail the bank's ID checks.

What ID do you need to open a basic bank account?

To confirm who you are, you will usually need one (original) of the following:

- Full, current passport
- Current European Union member state identity card
- Current UK photo card driving licence or UK full paper driving licence

- Benefit books/benefit entitlement letters; includes pension, child benefit, income support, disability and jobseeker's allowance
- HMRC tax notification or assessment letter

If you can not provide any of the accepted forms of ID on the list, it's best to contact the bank to explain the situation – it will be able to tell you if any other ID is acceptable.

New basic bank accounts to launch in 2015

By the end of 2015, everyone will be able to have a basic bank account. And unlike now these new basic accounts will be completely fee-free; there will be no charge for failed payments.

Nine banking groups will offer these improved accounts: Barclays, the Co-operative Bank, HSBC, Lloyds Banking Group (Bank of Scotland, Halifax and Lloyds), National Australia Group (Clydesdale Bank and Yorkshire Bank), Nationwide, RBS Group (NatWest, Royal Bank of Scotland and Ulster Bank), Santander and TSB.

Banks in Torfaen

The following banks and Building Societies (BS) will provide basic bank accounts;

Banks in Pontypool

Bank/Building Society	Address	Telephone
HSBC	1 Commercial Street NP4 6XU	03457 404 404 (central customer services)
Barclays Bank Plc	Commercial Street NP4 6XX	0345 734 5345 (central customer services)
Lloyds Bank	Hanbury Road NP4 6YE	0345 3000 000
Natwest Plc	Osborne Road NP4 6ZW	03457 888444 (Central Customer Services)
Nationwide BS	7 George Street NP4 6LR	0800 5540492
Principality BS	3 Commercial Street NP4 6JJ	01495 758577

Banks in Cwmbran

Bank/Building Society	Address	Telephone
HSBC	38 Gwent Square NP44 1XL	03457 404 404 (central customer services)
Santander Plc	11 North Walk NP44 1XF	0800 030 4321
Barclays Bank Plc	2 Gwent Square NP44 1XP	0345 734 5345 (central customer services)
Halifax BS	18 The Mall NP44 1YX	01633 200307

Lloyds Bank	1 Gwent Square NP44 1XN	0345 3000 000
Lloyds Bank	28-32 Commercial Street Pontnewydd Cwmbran NP44 1AE	0345 3000 000
Natwest Plc	36-37 Gwent Square NP44 1YW	03457 888444 (Central Customer Services)
Nationwide BS	The Mall NP44 1YS	0800 5540486
Principality BS	Cwmbran Shopping Centre NP44 1AH	01633 835000
Co-Operative Bank Plc	40 Gwent Square NP44 1YU	01633 872 749
Monmouthshire BS	8 The Parade NP44 1PT	01633 833933

Credit Unions

A few credit unions across the UK now offer bank accounts, and most of these allow undischarged bankrupts to get them. You may have to pay a small joining fee (£2-£5 per year) and/or commit to keeping a certain balance in your account to be a member. There is a Credit Union based in Pontypool. The details are as follows,

Gateway Credit Union-Pontypool - Head Office-[21 Commercial Street](#) tel: 01495 742500

The Gateway Credit Union offers safe, easy savings accounts and loans on fair terms to the people of Torfaen and Monmouthshire. As well as the Head office they also operate [community collection points](#). More information can be found on their website <http://www.gatewaycu.co.uk/index.php>