

For more information

If you are unsure about anything in this leaflet, contact your local CAB. Look in your telephone book under C or see our website www.adviceguide.org.uk to find the nearest one to you.

If you would like this leaflet in large print call 020 7833 7063 / 7064.

For an electronic copy see www.adviceguide.org.uk (Benefits). Also available in Chinese, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi, Urdu or Welsh from your local CAB.

- Department for Work and Pensions helpline: 0800 107 2000 (textphone 0800 107 4000) Welsh language 0800 107 8000 www.dwp.gov.uk/directpayment

- Veterans Agency (war pensions): 0800 169 22 77
- Tax credit helpline: 0845 3003900
- Post Office™ banking helpline: 08457 22 33 44 (textphone 08457 22 3355)



Produced by Citizens Advice
Myddelton House
115-123 Pentonville Road
London N1 9LZ

Registered charity number 279057
April 2004

How can I manage my money better?

- You may already have a bank account or are interested in opening one.
- Bank accounts can help you to have more control of your money.
- There are several kinds of accounts available, but this leaflet is mainly about *basic bank accounts*, which are simple to manage.



What types of bank accounts are there?

Basic bank account

These accounts are simple to use. You can pay money in, set up standing orders and direct debits and get money out using a cash card. You cannot go overdrawn.

It does not cost you anything to open a basic bank account. However, if there is not enough money in the account to pay a direct debit you have set up, you may be charged for this. See on p4–5.

Not all basic bank accounts can be accessed at a Post Office™ counter. If you want to do this, open one of the named basic bank accounts on p4–5.

Current account from a bank or building society

This type of account is similar to a basic bank account. However, you can also get money out using a cheque book and guarantee card, a cash card and you may get a debit card which you can use in shops and cash machines. The bank may let you have an overdraft and access to other kinds of credit.

Some banks or building societies will let you cash a current account personal cheque or use your cash card at your local Post Office™ counter free of charge. Ask at the Post Office™ whether you can do this free from your current account.

Post Office™ card account

Almost anyone can open one of these accounts. However, they can only be used to collect benefits, tax credits and state pensions. **You cannot pay any other money in.**

You can only get your money out of these accounts with a plastic card and Personal Identification Number (PIN) at a Post Office™ counter. Never give your PIN to someone else. You cannot get overdrawn on

a Post Office™ card account and you cannot use your card in any cash machines.



What do you want from your account?

	Basic	Current	PO™ card account
A cash card to use in bank and building society machines	✓	✓	—
A card to use at a Post Office counter	all accounts on p4–5	some	✓
To receive benefit, tax credits or state pension payments	✓	✓	✓
To pay any money into	✓	✓	—
To set up standing orders or direct debits	most	✓	—
Not to go overdrawn	✓	—	✓
To receive interest if there is money in the account	—	some	—
To pay money in at any bank, building society or Post Office™ counter without charge	all accounts on p4–5	some	—



What basic bank accounts are available?

All the major banks and building societies offer a basic bank account, which are accessible at a Post Office™ counter see below:

Bank/ building society	Name of basic bank account	Direct debit and standing orders available?	Charge made if direct debit unpaid	You may not be able to open the account if this applies to you
Abbey	Basic Current Account	Yes	Yes	Undischarged bankrupt, record of fraud
Alliance & Leicester	Basic Banking Account	Yes	Yes	Undischarged bankrupt, some bad debts
Bank of Scotland	Easycash	Yes	Yes	Undischarged bankrupt, record of fraud
Barclays	Cash Card Account	Direct debits only	Yes	Record of fraud
Clydesdale Bank	Cashmaster Account	Yes	Yes	Undischarged bankrupt, record of fraud, some bad debts
Co-operative Bank	Cashminder ■	Yes	No	Record of fraud
First Trust Bank	Basic Bank Account	Direct debits only	Yes	Undischarged bankrupt, record of fraud, record of bad debts
Halifax	Easycash	Yes	Yes	Undischarged bankrupt, record of fraud

Bank/ building society	Name of basic bank account	Direct debit and standing orders available?	Charge made if direct debit unpaid	You may not be able to open the account if this applies to you
HSBC	Basic Bank Account	Yes	No	Undischarged bankrupt, some bad debts
Lloyds TSB	Basic Bank Account	Yes	No	Undischarged bankrupt
Nationwide Building Society	FlexAccount Cash Card ●	Yes	Yes	History of fraud
Natwest	Step Account ■	Yes	Yes	Undischarged bankrupt
Northern Bank	Cashmaster Basic	Yes	Yes	Undischarged bankrupt, record of fraud, some bad debts
The Royal Bank of Scotland	Key Account	Yes	Yes	Undischarged bankrupt
Yorkshire Bank	Readycash	Yes	Yes	Undischarged bankrupt, record of fraud, some bad debts

All details correct at the time of publication.
Please check with the bank, building society or a CAB adviser.

- Minimum of £1 required to open this account
- Debit card provided on this account

Remember:

- if you have an overdraft on your current account or other debts to your bank and you open a basic bank account at the same bank or building society, they may use money in your new account to pay this off. Open a basic bank account at a *different* bank or building society or use a Post Office™ card account if you receive benefits, tax credits or state pensions. See p4–5
- paying some bills by direct debit can give you a discount
- some accounts are only available if you are over 18 – ask.



How to open a basic bank account?

- Visit the bank or building society you have chosen and ask to open a basic bank account *by name*. See p4–5. If necessary, show them this leaflet.
- You will need to show the bank two separate documents that prove who you are (e.g. your passport) and where you live (e.g. a recent bill) to open

an account. If you don't have any of the documents the bank wants, they should be able to accept a letter from a responsible person who knows you, such as a GP, teacher, social worker or probation officer.

- Before the bank offers you an account, they may want to run a credit check on you. Don't worry, even people with County Court Judgments (CCJ) or those who have been bankrupt may be able to open a basic bank account. See p4–5.



Having problems opening or using a bank account?

- Unsure about the type of account the bank is offering you?
- The bank won't open a basic bank account for you?
- Not able to get out money from your account yourself?

Contact your local Citizens Advice Bureau for advice.

How do I open a Post Office™ card account?

For further information about opening a Post Office™ card account speak to a CAB adviser.

