



Opening a Basic Bank Account in County Durham

The information in this booklet is correct to the best of our knowledge as of July 2015.

There are all kinds of reasons to want to open a bank account but whatever your reason this booklet will help you decide which account to choose and explain how to open it as easily and quickly as possible.



For more information about opening a basic bank account please contact the Monkey team on 01388 424697 or email ask@monkey.uk.net

Q1. What type of account do you want?

Banks and building societies usually offer several bank accounts. The two main types are current accounts and basic accounts. Here's a summary:

	Current accounts	Basic accounts
Cash card with PIN number to get cash out of a machine	Yes	Yes
Direct debits and standing orders	Yes	Yes
Online and telephone banking	Yes	Yes
Pay in money via cash, cheques, wages, electronic transfer, pension or benefits including Universal Credit	Yes	Yes
Debit card	Yes	Sometimes
Cheque book	Yes	No
Interest on credit balance	Sometimes	No
Monthly statements	Yes	Statements are available but they are not always monthly.
Access to credit (e.g. overdraft)	Yes, but there are extra charges.	No, although some do have a small buffer of £10 or £15.

Local Credit Unions



Durham Office: 136 Edge Court, Gilesgate, Durham, County Durham, DH1 2XG

Telephone Number: 0330 0553666

Website: www.nefirstcu.org.uk



Head Office: 25-33 Front Street, Stanley, County Durham, DH9 0JE

Telephone Number: 01207 232351

Website: www.princebishopscommunitybank.org.uk



Branches: Crook, Durham, Murton, Newton Aycliffe, Peterlee, Seaham

Telephone: 0345 9758758

Basic account name: Cash Account

How to open: Go into a branch or apply on the website.

Good for: Offers mobile, phone and internet banking. Also offers free text alerts to help you manage your money. You can pay in and take out money at a Post Office counter. 'Save the Change' lets you save up money every time you use your debit card.

More Info: www.tsb.co.uk



AL RAYAN BANK

Telephone: 0808 2317680

How to open: Call 0845 5913160 to apply by phone or print an application form from the website.

Good for: If you would like a Sharia compliant account.

Not so good if: You're not working or can't pay at least £500 into the account when you open it.

More info: www.alrayanbank.co.uk

Access to a cash machine	Yes	Yes, although some banks only allow you to use their machines, not machines at other banks.
Counter service in bank branches	Yes	Some basic accounts have full counter services, some have restrictions. You may also be able to use a Post Office to pay in or withdraw money.

Basic bank accounts don't give access to credit, e.g. an overdraft so they don't need a full credit check. They can be easier to get if you've not had an account before, have had money worries or are living on benefits.

There are a couple of other types of account you may want to consider.

Credit union accounts

A credit union is a form of savings and loans club offering accounts and loans at reasonable rates of interest.

To join the credit union, you can request an application form at a collection point, by phone, email or download one from their website. Fill in and take the completed form and 2 forms of ID to your local collection point or return by post. You usually need to withdraw cash from the credit union, not a cash machine, although you can pay money in via a Pay Point. There's also a small joining fee (from as little as £1). See page 15 for information on local credit unions.

Post Office Card Accounts

Post Office Card Accounts are run by the Post Office and can only receive money from benefits or state pension (so no cash, cheques, wages, private pension or housing benefit can be paid into the account). You get a card and PIN number but you can **only** get cash out from a post office counter during opening hours.

To open an account you need to contact the government department that pays your benefits or tax credits and ask about opening an account.

Q2. What identification do you need?

Banks ask for ID so that they can spot any fraud or money laundering problems. Before giving any ID it's a good idea to check that it is accurate – all the spellings of names and addresses are the same, and current. Different banks accept different documents. Try again if yours are not accepted first time.

Banks have made their identification checks more thorough in the last few years and it is common to be told that the only acceptable forms of ID are passports, driving licences and utility bills. **This is not true.**

You will probably need one item from each of these lists :

Proof of Identity

- Current UK/EU Passport
- Current European Union member state identity card
- Current UK or EU photocard driving licence
- Current full older style paper driving licence
- Notification of benefit or pension entitlement letter (dated within the last three months)
- HMRC tax code notification letter



Branches: Bishop Auckland, Chester-le-Street, Durham, Newton Aycliffe, Stanley

Telephone: 0800 0686069

Basic account name: Basic Current Account

How to open: Go into a branch, apply on the phone or online.

Good for: Offers mobile, phone and internet banking. Also offers free text alerts to help you manage your money. Offers a Top Up debit card or a Cash Card to help you manage your money. You can also withdraw your cash at a Post Office counter.

More info: www.santander.co.uk



Branches: Chester-le-Street, Durham

Telephone: 0800 302010

Basic account name: FlexBasic

How to open: Apply online or collect an application form from a branch.

Good for: Offers mobile, internet and phone banking. Also offers free text alerts to help you manage your money. Apple Pay is available. You can also withdraw your cash at a Post Office counter

More info: www.nationwide.co.uk



Branches: Bishop Auckland, Durham, Ferryhill, Newton Aycliffe, Peterlee

Telephone: 03457 888444

Basic account name: Foundation Account

How to open: You can't apply for this account directly. You need to apply for a current account and if you are not approved you will be offered this account without the need to reapply.

Good for: Offers internet, phone and mobile banking.

More info: www.natwest.com

Proof of Address

- Current UK or EU photocard driving licence
- Full older style paper driving licence
- Notification of benefit or pension entitlement letter (usually dated within past 12 months)
- HMRC tax code notification letter
- Utility bill usually dated within the past 3 months (not mobile phone or Sky/digital TV)
- Statement from another FSA registered institution (bank, insurer, credit card, mortgage provider) usually dated in the past 3 months
- Recent council tax bill (the amount can say £0 if you get benefits)
- Local council or Registered Social Landlord tenancy agreement (not from a private landlord)

If you do not have these forms of ID you may be able to use a letter from one of the people below. Letters should be an original document on letter headed paper with a contact name and number (not mobile), and dated within the last 6 months.

- An employer or college
- A hostel manager or solicitor
- Your landlord saying they receive housing benefit on your behalf
- A person in a position of trust, e.g. doctor, social worker (some may charge for this)
- A utility company if you pay for utilities by Key Card

Some banks will also accept:

- Disabled driver's pass (Blue Badge)
- Northern Ireland Electoral Identity Card
- Current TV licence
- Firearm licence
- Car tax renewal

Q3. Which bank do you want to use?

All of the main banks offer current or basic accounts but each of the accounts may provide slightly different services. This guide looks at each of the **basic** accounts.

Once you've chosen an account and made an application it usually takes about two weeks to process. First your application form will be checked. The bank may contact you if they have any questions. You'll then get a welcome pack in the post with your sort code and account number.

Find your nearest cash machine

Visit www.link.co.uk/ATMLocator and enter your location to find cash machines in your area. The website also shows if the ATM is operated by a particular bank and states whether or not the ATM is free to use. When choosing a bank it is useful to pick one with a 'free to withdraw' cash machine near to where you live. This will avoid you being charged to withdraw your money.

Visit www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk to find out which type of bank account is best for you.



Branches: Birtley, Bishop Auckland, Chester-le-Street, Consett, Durham, Esh Winning, Langley Moor, Peterlee, Sacriston, Seaham, Spennymoor, Stanley

Telephone: 03453 000000

Basic account name: Basic Account

Note: You can't apply for this account directly. You need to apply for a Classic Account and if you are not approved you will be offered with account without the need to reapply.

How to open: Apply online or in a branch

Good for: Offers mobile, phone and internet banking. Also offers free text alerts to help you manage your money. Lloyds accounts offer additional features including cashback on your spending and 'Save the Change' where they round up your spending to the nearest pound and deposit the difference into a savings account.

More info: www.lloydsbank.com



Branches: Barnard Castle, Bishop Auckland, Chester-le-Street, Consett, Durham, Peterlee

Telephone: 0800 1695422

Basic account name: Basic Bank Account

How to open: Call 0800 1695422 to apply by phone, order an application form from the HSBC website or collect one from a branch.

Good for: Offers mobile, phone and internet banking. Also offers Apple Pay.

More info: www.hsbc.co.uk



Branches: Barnard Castle, Birtley, Bishop Auckland, Carrville, Chester-le-Street, Consett, Crook, Durham, Lanchester, Middleton-in-Teesdale, Newton Aycliffe, Peterlee, Seaham, Sedgefield, Spennymoor, Stanhope, Stanley, Wolsingham

Telephone: 0345 6004545

Basic account name: Basic Current Account

How to open: Go into a branch to book a half hour appointment. An account will be opened there and then if you have ID.

Good for: You can still apply if you've been bankrupt or in an IVA. Offers mobile, phone and online banking and text alerts to help you manage your money.

More info: www.barclays.co.uk

Branches: Bishop Auckland, Chester-le-Street, Consett, Durham

Telephone: 0345 6027057

Basic account name: Cashminder

How to open: Call 0345 6027057 to apply by phone, call into a branch or request a form to be sent to you in the post.

Good for: You can still apply if you've been bankrupt (discharged) or in an IVA. Offers mobile, phone and online banking. You can use Post Offices to pay in money and cheques if you can't get to a Co-op branch.

More info: www.co-operativebank.co.uk



Branches: Bishop Auckland, Chester-le-Street, Consett, Durham, Newton Aycliffe, Peterlee

Telephone: 03457 203040

Basic account name: Basic Account

Note: You can't apply for this account directly. You need to apply for a Current Account and if you are not approved you will be offered this account without having to reapply.

How to open: Fill out an application on the Halifax website or collect an application from a branch.

Good for: You can still apply if you have been made bankrupt. Offers phone, mobile and internet banking and free text alerts to help you manage your money.

More info: www.halifax.co.uk

Also visit www.halifaxcreditchecker.co.uk to get free unlimited access to your credit report and score. This can help you understand your credit rating.