

News story: Over 900,000 more customers open fee-free basic bank accounts

Over 900,000 new fee-free basic bank accounts were opened between July 2016 and June 2017, taking the total number of fee-free accounts open to nearly 5 million, according to the government's basic bank account report published today.

Basic bank accounts have been available in the UK for over a decade, but since September 2016 the UK's nine largest banks have been legally required to offer fee-free basic bank accounts, designed to improve financial inclusion for those who don't have a current account or who might struggle to open a standard account.

Other findings in this year's report include:

- there are just under 8 million basic bank accounts open in the UK
- for the second year running, Nationwide and Lloyds Banking Group opened the most fee-free basic bank accounts between July 2016 and June 2017
- Nationwide, Clydesdale Yorkshire Banking Group, and Co-op have a larger market share of basic bank accounts than personal current accounts
- Lloyds Banking Group accounts for almost half of the basic bank account market

Stephen Barclay, the Economic Secretary to the Treasury said:

Making sure that everyone has access to the financial services that they need is at the heart of our plan to build a fairer society and an economy that is fit for the future. The government has legislated to make sure fee-free basic bank accounts are available to those who need them and I am pleased to see that so many people – who might have previously been at risk of running up debt through bank charges – have access to a completely free account. It is important for a fair economy that banks continue to help all their customers to manage their finances confidently and responsibly.