

BANK ACCOUNTS

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW?



DEVELOPING HOMES AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES
FOR PEOPLE WITHIN WEST NORFOLK

Freebridge
COMMUNITY HOUSING

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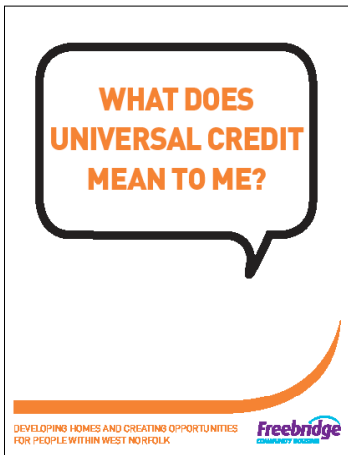
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BANK ACCOUNTS, HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW?

This guide will help you to set up the right type of account in order for you to receive Universal Credit payments.

Universal Credit is replacing a number of 'income benefits' and 'housing benefit' with one single monthly payment. For more information on Universal Credit and what these changes mean to you, please see our booklet - 'What does Universal Credit mean to me?'



If you do not have an account you will not be able to receive your monthly Universal Credit payments.

Almost anyone can get a basic bank account. Most people turned down for a bank account are turned down because they don't provide the right identification documents that the bank needs to comply with financial regulations. We can help you to understand what identification you need and help you to access this.

Past credit problems - such as County Court Judgements, defaults, or having been declared bankrupt in the past year - are usually not a barrier. However, if you have a history of criminal convictions for fraud you may be turned down (though this doesn't apply to everyone with a criminal record - many banks work with offenders to give them access to accounts).

If you have any questions about Universal Credit and Bank Accounts, please call your Income Advisor on 03332 404 444



7 SIMPLE STEPS TO OPEN A BANK ACCOUNT

Opening a bank account is simple when you know what to expect. By following these steps and referring to the information on the following pages you will soon be ready to open the right type of account for you.

STEP 1 – Choose an account provider

You may have already done this, if not, shop around. You may choose to approach a Branch that your family or friends use, or you may choose a bank because of its location. For a list of local banks please refer to page 19.

If you have access to the internet a good place to start is a bank account comparison website such as: www.moneysavingexpert.com or www.money.co.uk

STEP 2 – Go to the bank or the banks website

The easiest way to complete this step is to find the bank's website. The advantage of opening an account online is that you can do it at any time of the day.

If you are more comfortable opening an account in person then you can simply show up at your local branch during business hours. Ensure that you take along the identification that you will need – refer to page 16-17 for a list of acceptable forms of identification. Some banks may require you to make an appointment in advance; contact your local branch to check this before you make the journey.

STEP 3 – Pick the type of account you want

All account providers have a variety of account types and services that you can mix and match. They often have different names that you may need to learn but they all basically offer the same variety of different types of accounts. It is important to choose the right type of account for you. To help you work out what is the cheapest or most useful account for you please refer to pages 9-14.

If you are opening an account online, you may need to spend time to find the type of account that you are looking for. For example Basic Account Accounts are often hard to find online as banks are keener for you to sign up to a fee-based packaged account.

If you open your account in a branch, you can chat to the Advisor about what is best for you.

REMEMBER - staff may be keen to sign you up for a fee paying account so make sure you specifically ask for a 'Basic Bank Account' by name as they may not even mention the option.

STEP 4 – Provide your information

In order to open your account you will need to provide some information to the bank. This is to protect them and to comply with a variety of regulations.

You will need to provide simple details such as your name, address and date of birth. You will also need to provide identification as detailed on page 16 & 17. If you are applying online you will be asked to provide the identification to your local branch. If you do not take this information into the branch your account will not be opened.

STEP 5 – Agree to Terms

When you open an account at a bank, you form a relationship based on a very important subject – your money. It is therefore important that you understand your account terms and conditions, and the

consequences of breaking them. For example what charges may be incurred if you go overdrawn.

STEP 6 – Print, Sign and Post (if applicable)

If you open the account in person, this stage will not apply. If you open an account online you will most likely have to print, sign and post a document and provide this to the bank along with your identification before your account is opened.

Some banks may use something called electronic disclosure and consent which is legally binding. However many still won't open an account unless you complete this step. Until they receive all of the information your account will not be opened.

STEP 7 – Congratulate yourself!

Congratulations! You are now the proud owner of a bank account!

Now, you'll just have to wait a few days for the bank to process your paperwork; you should receive all paperwork, cash cards/debit cards, PIN numbers and cheque books (if applicable) within a few days of your account being opened.



ARE YOU READY FOR UNIVERSAL CREDIT?

To receive Universal Credit, you will need to have: a bank or building society account, or an account with an alternative provider such as Eastern Savings and Loans Credit Union. Here we explain the options available and the pros and cons of each one. This way you can choose an account that's suitable for you or check whether the one you already have is the best for you.

To receive your Universal Credit payment, you will need to have an account that can receive electronic payments, such as a:

- Current Account
- Basic Bank Account
- 'Jam Jar' Account (also called a budgeting account)
- Eastern Savings and Loans Credit Union Current Account
- Post Office Card Account

Ideally your account should also allow you to make electronic payments out of the account – such as Direct Debits or standing orders – for bills such as rent, gas and electricity.

The following accounts allow you to make outgoing electronic payments (i.e. Direct Debits):

- Current Account
- Basic Bank Account
- Jam Jar Account
- Eastern Savings and Loans Credit Union Current Account

Please Note: The Post Office® card account does not allow you to make outgoing electronic payments.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT ACCOUNT FOR YOU

BASIC BANK ACCOUNTS

Basic bank accounts are the simplest type of bank account. They are designed for people who don't want an overdraft, or can't have one. They can be useful if you have a low credit score, need a way to receive benefit payments or just want to control your spending. You can use a basic bank account to receive money and pay bills. For lots of people, they're a first step towards opening a current account later on.

Services & features	BASIC BANK ACCOUNT
Accepts Universal Credit and other benefit payments	Yes
Accepts other forms of income, such as wages from work	Yes
Allows Direct Debits and standing orders	Yes
Overdraft facility	No
Cash card with PIN for cash machine	Yes
Debit card	Sometimes
Cheque book	No
Credit checks needed when you open the account	No
Fees and charges	No fees

What do basic bank accounts offer?

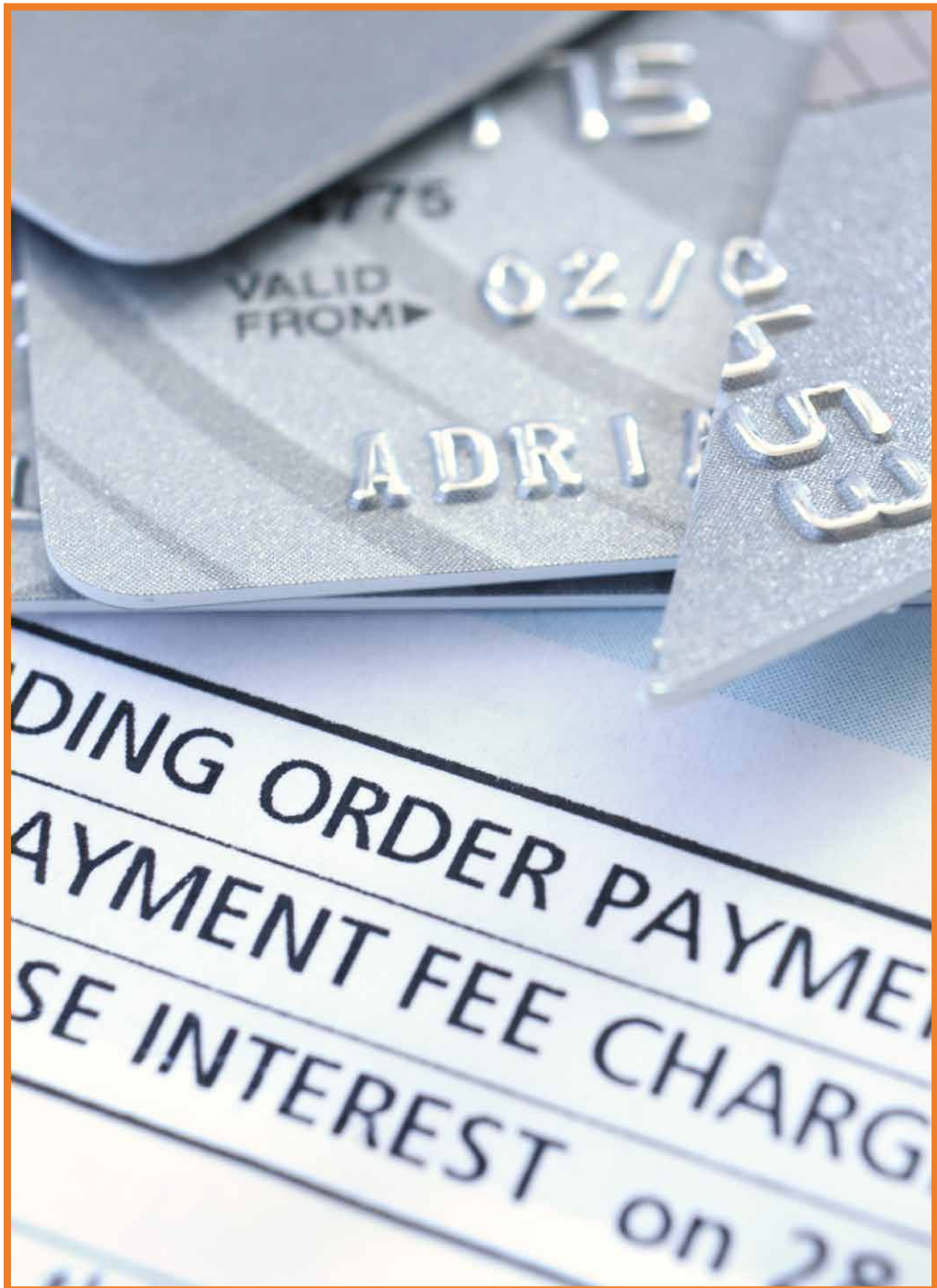
With most accounts, you can:

- Have wages, salary, benefits, pensions and tax credits paid straight into your account.
- Pay cheques in for free (as long as they're not in foreign currency) – you'll be able to spend the money after the funds have cleared.
- Withdraw money at cash machines and Post Offices
- Pay your bills by Direct Debit or standing order
- Use bank counters to pay money in, take it out or check your account balance.

Some accounts will also give you a debit card.

A Eastern Savings and Loans Credit Union Current Account is different to the High Street Current Accounts in that Eastern Savings Credit Unions provide a Current Account no matter what your credit history is. They do not provide an overdraft facility, therefore preventing large overdraft fees. The account has a current charge of 0.98p a week.





CURRENT ACCOUNTS

A current account is for you if you get regular payments such as wages, salary, benefits, tax credits or pensions and you need regular access to your money, or you want to make payments by cheque or credit card. Most people use a current account with a bank or building society to manage their day-to-day money.

What do current accounts offer?

With most accounts, you can:

- Receive payments directly into your account
- Pay cheques into your account – pound sterling cheques are free to pay in
- Withdraw cash and check your balance at a cash machine and Post Offices
- Set up Direct Debits and standing orders to pay your bills
- You can access most current accounts through a high street branch, online, using mobile banking or over the phone
- Apply for an overdraft allowing you to spend an agreed amount more than you have in your account – although you may be charged for this facility.

Services & features	CURRENT ACCOUNT
Accepts Universal Credit and other benefit payments	Yes
Accepts other forms of income, such as wages from work	Yes
Allows Direct Debits and standing orders	Yes
Overdraft facility	Yes
Cash card with PIN for cash machine	Yes
Debit card	Yes
Cheque book	Yes
Credit checks needed when you open the account	Yes
Fees and charges	Fees and interest on overdrafts & charges for refused Direct Debits

Some accounts charge high fees and interest if you go overdrawn, and most have penalty charges if there is not enough in your account to cover a Direct Debit or standing order.

PACKAGED CURRENT ACCOUNTS

For a monthly fee, you can change your current account to a packaged account and get access to benefits like travel insurance, preferential rate overdrafts and more. But these extras aren't always worth the fee.

Here's what you need to know before you decide.

Most banks offer a wide range of accounts, from no-frills current accounts to packaged accounts that offer a range of extras in exchange for a monthly fee.

What do packaged accounts offer?

With most accounts, you can get:

- Commission-free foreign currency
- Travel insurance
- Motor breakdown cover
- Mobile phone insurance
- Identification fraud insurance
- A discounted – or interest free – overdraft
- Preferential rates on other financial products.

What to watch out for:

- The cost of the account may be higher than the cost of buying the benefits separately
- The insurance you get may be pretty basic – it might not give you the level of cover you need
- You may not need all the benefits attached to the account
- With some banks, you have to activate each of the services before you can use them. Check whether you need to do this when you open the account, otherwise you may find that your insurance is invalid and that you've been paying for something you can not use.

If you're thinking about switching to a 'packaged account' just because you need an overdraft, first ask your bank if they can add one to your existing current account. If you don't use it often, sticking with a free current account is probably the cheaper option.

JAM JAR ACCOUNTS

With a jam jar – or budgeting – bank account, you divide your account into different ‘pots’ or ‘jars’. Typically there are different pots for spending and bills and there may be a pot for saving too. You decide how much money goes into each pot by working out how much you need for your bills and how much is left over for spending or saving.

What do Jam Jar accounts offer?

With most accounts, you can:

- You can be sure that when rent day (or bill day) comes, the money will be there to cover the payment
- You may be able to arrange text alerts to warn you if your balance is running low
- You might have access to advice on managing your money.

Jam Jar accounts are relatively new, although more will become available over the next few months. The disadvantage is that these accounts charge a fee – usually £10-15 a month – however, you may decide that it’s a price worth paying if it means you can avoid missed payment charges and overdraft fees.

Services & features	JAM JAR ACCOUNTS
Accepts Universal Credit and other benefit payments	Yes
Accepts other forms of income, such as wages from work	Yes
Allows Direct Debits and standing orders	Yes
Overdraft facility	No
Cash card with PIN for cash machine	Yes
Debit card	No
Cheque book	No
Credit checks needed when you open the account	No
Fees and charges	Monthly fee of around £5-£15, no other charges

EASTERN SAVINGS AND LOANS

Eastern Savings and Loans is a credit union established in 2001 who serve over 5,000 members around Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire. They offer a range of savings accounts, pay as you go debit cards and loans to their members.

If you live, work, study or volunteer inside the boundaries of Norfolk, Suffolk or Cambridgeshire, you are eligible to join Eastern Savings and Loans Credit Union. If you are employed by one of our Payroll partners you will also be eligible to join.

What do Eastern Savings and Loans accounts offer?

Savings

- Dividend Savings Accounts
- Christmas Savers
- Junior Saver
- Pay as you go debit cards

Loans

- Starter loan (borrow up to £1,000)
- Flexible loan (borrow from £1,000 to £3,000)
- Advantage loan (borrow from £3,000 to £7,500)
- Child benefit Savings and Loan Plan

To enquire about the different types of accounts and loans to make an appointment to join Eastern Savings and Loans please contact them directly on 03336 000690 or visit www.eslcu.co.uk

Alternatively you can contact you Income Advisor on 03332 404444.

Eastern Savings and Loans appointments are also available at Freebridge Community Housing and other locations around the King's Lynn area, appointments must be made in advance.

Services & features	EASTERN SAVINGS CREDIT UNION PREPAID CARD
Accepts Universal Credit and other benefit payments	Yes
Accepts other forms of income, such as wages from work	Yes
Allows Direct Debits and standing orders	Not always (check with the provider)
Overdraft facility	No
Cash card with PIN for cash machine	Yes, although you may be charged
Debit card	Most prepaid cards can be used in all the same places as a debit card
Cheque book	No
Credit checks needed when you open the account	No
Fees and charges	Charges vary, can include fees for set-up, to top-up and for withdrawing cash



ACCEPTABLE FORMS OF IDENTIFICATION

To open an account, you will usually be asked for two or three different documents to prove who you are and to verify your current address.

If you do not have the usual forms of identification such as a passport or driving license, the following may be able to be used.

This is a general guide and should not be treated as a comprehensive list of acceptable identification. You should check first with the Bank, Building Society or Post Office to find out what ID they will accept.

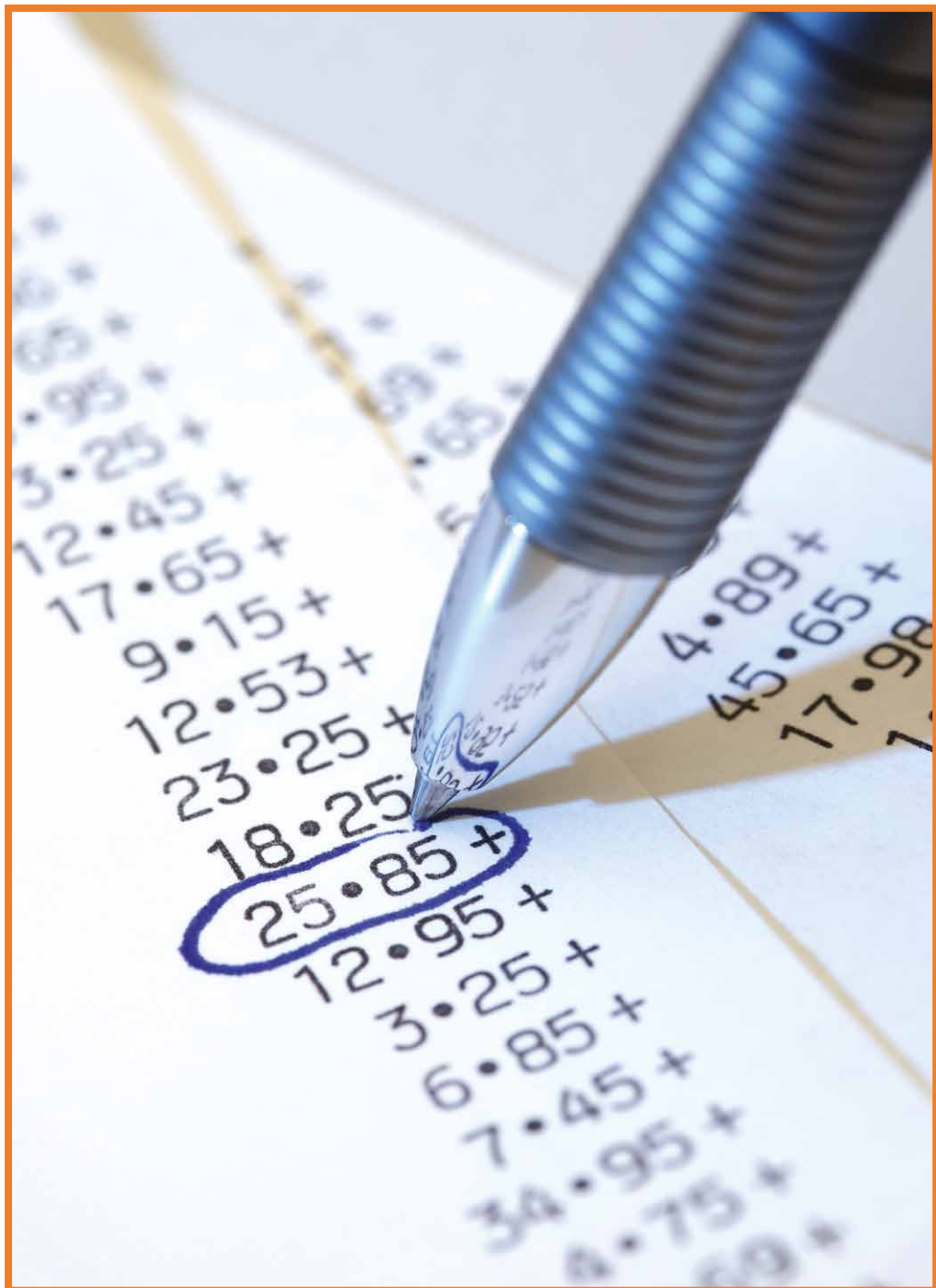
- Gas Bill
- Electricity Bill
- Water Bill
- Phone Bill
- Gas, Electric, Phone statements for those who pay by key card
- Council Tax Bill or Payment Book (within last 12 months). If you are not liable for council tax, a statement showing 'zero' is acceptable. If you are not the bill payer at your address, it maybe acceptable to produce the bill in another name accompanied by a covering letter from the bill payer confirming that you live there.
- Cable/Sky Bill if it includes your landline phone connection
- TV License Renewal Notification

Bills should be less than three months old.

- Vehicle Registration Certificate (V5C)
- Motor Insurance certificate - policy holder only within 12 months
- Letter confirming your right to a State Pension

continued...

- Original Notification Letter from DWP confirming the right to benefit such as Job Seeker's Allowance/ Income Support/ Pension Credit etc.
- National Insurance Card if accompanied by recent P60 or payslip which also shows your National Insurance (NI) number
- HMRC Notification of Child Tax Credit
- HMRC Notification of Disabled Persons Tax Credit
- HMRC Notification of Working Family Tax Credit
- HMRC Tax Calculation -Tax Code Notification
- Printed HMRC documentation showing NI number and produced within 12 months. (not P45 or P60)
- HMRC Notification of Child Benefit
- Local Council/ Housing Association Rent Card or Tenancy Agreement
- Letter from Religious Minister
- Letter confirming National Insurance Number (The card alone will not be accepted)
- Letter from a GP (Doctor) addressed to the individual
- Letter from Social Worker which confirms your address. All letters should be on headed paper.
- Electoral Roll – organisations may do an electronic search to confirm address
- Home Contents/Building Insurance Certificate
- A letter from an Employer
- Payslips
- Employment Contract
- Employment Agency Registration Details
- Evidence of Jobseeking – such as correspondence with potential employers
- EU identification cards
- Construction Industry Photo Registration Card - CIS4,CIS4(P), CIS6
- UK Armed Forces Identity Card
- Credit Card Statement - Make sure that the statement is less than three months old and always present the original document.
- UK Border Agency Application
- Registration Card with photograph and chip.



LOCAL BRANCHES

King's Lynn:

Barclays	91-92 High Street	0845 755 5555
Halifax	72 High Street	01553 730105
HSBC	23 New Conduit Street	0845 740 4404
TSB	1 Tuesday Market Place	0845 975 8758
Lloyds	21-23 High Street	0845 300 0000
Nationwide	9 New Conduit Street	01553 730000
NatWest	4 Tuesday Market Place	0845 788 8444
Post Office	7 Norfolk Street	0845 722 3344
RBS	18 New Conduit Street	01553 764027
Santander	19 High Street	0845 765 4321

Downham Market:

Barclays	13 Bridge Street	0845 755 5555
HSBC	24 High Street	0845 740 4404
Lloyds	26 Bridge Street	0845 300 0000
NatWest	37 High Street	0845 303 1843
Norwich & Peterborough	15 Wales Court	01366 387327
Post Office	9 Wales Court	0845 722 3344

Hunstanton:

Barclays	42 High Street	0845 755 5555
Nationwide	18 Greevegate	0845 266 0449
NatWest	Northgate	0845 788 8444

Wisbech:

Barclays	12 Old Market	0845 755 5555
Halifax	28 Market Place	01945 670704
HSBC	1 Cornhill	0845 740 4404
Lloyds	3 North Brink	0845 300 0000
NatWest	1 Market Place	0845 600 2803
Santander	Market Place	0845 765 4321

**If you still have questions about Bank Accounts,
please call your Income Advisor on 03332 404 444**

**IF YOU NEED ANY HELP TO UNDERSTAND
THIS LEAFLET PLEASE GET IN TOUCH**

Freebridge Community Housing
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Norfolk PE30 1DZ

Email: enquiries@freebridge.org.uk
Main Switchboard Telephone: 03332 404 444

Office Opening Hours:

8:45am - 5.15pm (Mon-Thurs)

8:45am - 4.45pm (Fri)

Bank Holidays, Saturday and Sunday Closed

Out of Office Hours:

The main telephone number (03332 404 444)
will divert to our 24 hour emergency service.