

Switching your personal current account in Northern Ireland

This guide will help if you want to move your current account to another bank or building society.

What is switching?

Switching is the way banks and building societies help you to move your current (payment) account to a new bank or building society. Most switches take place using the Current Account Switch Service (CASS).

Other switching options are also used. Ask your bank or building society to explain the services they can provide.

What is the Current Account Switch Service?

The Current Account Switch Service is a free-to-use service designed to make switching current accounts simple, and stress-free. The service is backed by a guarantee, which makes sure you will be refunded any interest (lost or paid) as well as charges on either your old or new current accounts in the unlikely event of something going wrong with the switch.

The following steps explain how your bank or building society will help you and who is responsible for each step of the switching process.

Step 1 – How switching your account works

If you want to switch your current account, the new bank or building society will explain:

- how switching your account works and who is responsible for each step;
- the switching options that may be available to you;
- what information will be passed from the old to the new bank or building society, with your permission;
- what features your new account will have; and
- how long it should take to carry out the move.

Step 2 – Moving your payments to the new account

Your new bank or building society will:

- explain the Current Account Switch Service Guarantee, if this is the service that will be used;
- agree a convenient switch date with you, if this applies;
- with your permission, ask your old bank or building society for information about you and your Direct Debits, standing orders and any other payment arrangements, for example the companies or people you pay using internet and telephone banking; and
- arrange with your old bank or building society to transfer any money in your account (your credit balance) on the switch date you have chosen and agreed with them.

Once your old bank or building society has received the new bank or building society's request for information, they will give the new bank or building society information about your payments and contact you to confirm they have received your permission to switch.

Step 3 – Carrying out the switch

Once you have given permission for the switch and the banks or building societies have swapped information, they will:

- confirm the switch has started.
- give your new account details to organisations you have Direct Debits with (for example, gas, electricity, water and mobile phone companies).
- set up standing orders on your new account so that you can continue to make your regular payments.
- within a reasonable time, give you back any charges or interest that you had to pay them because of a failure during the switching process.

Your old bank or building society will:

- close your old account, if you have given permission for this to happen; and
- within a reasonable time, give you back any charges or interest that you had to pay them because of a failure during the switching process.

What you will need to do if you want to switch

- Ask your bank or building society if your account will be switched using the Current Account Switch Service. If it will, your bank or building society will make sure that regular payments into your account (such as your pension, pay or benefits) are automatically redirected to your new account.
- If your account is not switched by using the Current Account Switch Service, and you receive regular payments into your account (such as your pension, pay or benefits), you will need to ensure that the payer (for example your employer or benefits agency) knows the details of your new account so that they start making these payments to your new account.

