



# Money monitor

Best Buys plus  
what's in  
the news

## IS IT WORTH IT?

### Personal Home Plan

Aimed exclusively at the over-50s, this is a new home insurance buildings and contents policy from Lloyds TSB. All policyholders are covered for fire, theft, flood and subsidence but beyond this can 'pick and mix' from 21 additional options, such as freezer contents, plants and trees, storm damage to fences and gates or cover for a mobility scooter away from home. Options you don't need can be omitted, and cover you particularly value can be increased. There is a 10-year no-claims discount of 50%.

**VERDICT** Offers an attractive element of choice, although many existing policies already allow you to extend cover as required. You should still compare quotes to make sure the offer you get is competitive. The 50% no-claims discount is an attractive feature for those who rarely claim. For recent Best Buys see *Which?*, July 2008, p24.



Lloyds TSB

## Contacts

**Abbey** 0800 389 9905 (credit card)/0800 587 2764 (savings)  
www.abbey.com  
**Alliance & Leicester** 0800 068 6069  
www.alliance-leicester.co.uk  
**Barclaycard** 0845 766 0758  
www.barclaycard.co.uk  
**Bradford & Bingley** www.bradfordandbingley.co.uk  
**Cahoot** www.cahoot.com  
**Capital One Bank** 0800 952 5452  
www.capitalone.co.uk  
**Halifax/Bank of Scotland** 0845 728 3848; www.halifax.co.uk  
**Harley-Davidson**  
0800 515166  
www.chrome-card.co.uk  
**Icesave** www.icesave.co.uk  
**Intelligent Finance** 0845 609 4343; www.if.com  
**John Lewis/Waitrose Partnership** 0845 300 3830  
www.partnershipcard.co.uk  
**Kent Reliance BS** 0845 122 0022; www.krbs.co.uk  
**Nationwide BS** 0800 302010  
www.nationwide.co.uk  
**Northern Bank (NI)** www.northernbank.co.uk  
**Principality BS** www.principality.co.uk  
**Smile** 0870 843 2265  
www.smile.co.uk  
**Ulster Bank (NI)** 028 9089 8888; www.ulsterbank.com  
**Yorkshire BS** www.ybs.co.uk

CURRENT ACCOUNTS	A/C DETAILS		OVERDRAFT	CUSTOMER SATISFACTION	
	MIN MTHLY PAY IN (£)	INTEREST ON £1+ (%)		INTERNET	OVERALL
<b>ALLIANCE &amp; LEICESTER Premier Direct</b> <sup>a,b,c</sup>	500	8.50 <sup>d</sup>	see <sup>e</sup>	★★★★	★★★★
<b>CAHOOT</b>	n/a	3.65 <sup>f</sup>	11.80	★★★★★	★★★★★
<b>INTELLIGENT FINANCE</b>	n/a	2.25	10.05	★★★★★	★★★★★
<b>NATIONWIDE BS FlexAccount</b>	1,000	2.00 <sup>g</sup>	12.90	★★★★★	★★★★★
<b>SMILE</b> <sup>a</sup>	see <sup>h</sup>	2.27	15.90 <sup>j</sup>	★★★★★	★★★★★

Ratings are from the results of our most recent customer satisfaction survey. The more stars the better

<sup>a</sup> Includes benefits such as exclusive deals on its other products <sup>b</sup> Must register for this account with a valid email address <sup>c</sup> No paper statements available: account transactions must be viewed online <sup>d</sup> On credit balances up to £2,500 for a year <sup>e</sup> 12-month free overdraft, then 50p a day (max £5 a month) <sup>f</sup> 3.75% without chequebook <sup>g</sup> 3.5% if monthly payment into account is £1,500 or more <sup>h</sup> You must make a regular monthly payment into the account of at least £1,000 <sup>j</sup> 12-month £500 fee-free overdraft

CASH ISAs TRANSFERS IN	ACCESS	AER (%)	TERMS		CONSISTENCY
			INITIAL DEPOSIT (£)	MONTHLY INTEREST	
<b>ICESAVE Easy Access</b>	I	6.10	1,000	✓	✓
<b>ABBEY Direct Issue 2</b>	I/P/T	6.00 <sup>a</sup>	1		
<b>PRINCIPALITY BS e-Isa</b>	I	6.00	1		✓
<b>KENT RELIANCE BS Direct</b>	P	5.76	1		✓
<b>YORKSHIRE BS e-Isa</b>	I	5.65 <sup>b</sup>	10		✓
<b>BRADFORD &amp; BINGLEY e-Isa 3</b>	I	5.65 <sup>c</sup>	1,000	✓	✓

**Access** This shows the type of account: I=internet; P=post-al; T=telephone

<sup>a</sup> After 13 months rates revert to up to 5%, depending on account balance <sup>b</sup> 5.65% from £10,000 to £19,999; 5.55% below £10,000 <sup>c</sup> 5.65% only above £10,000; 5.3% below that

CREDIT CARDS – 0% ON PURCHASES	APR (%)	0% PERIOD PURCHASE (MONTHS)
<b>CAPITAL ONE BANK Platinum MasterCard</b>	14.9 <sup>a</sup>	Until 1 Nov 2009
<b>BARCLAYCARD Platinum Purchase and Long Term Balance Card</b>	16.9	10
<b>HALIFAX/BANK OF SCOTLAND All in One MasterCard</b>	15.9 <sup>a</sup>	10
<b>HARLEY-DAVIDSON Platinum (Affinity) MasterCard<sup>b</sup></b>	12.9	9

<sup>a</sup> Rate depends on your credit score <sup>b</sup> Also available as a Chrome (Affinity) MasterCard (15.9% APR)

0% BALANCE TRANSFER	APR (%)	0% PERIOD TRANSFER (MONTHS)	TRANSFER FEE	DEAL STARTS
<b>ABBEY Zero MasterCard</b>	18.9	6	None	Issue
<b>ULSTER BANK (NI) Gold MasterCard</b>	17.9	6	None	Issue
<b>NORTHERN BANK (NI) Visa<sup>a</sup></b>	17.9	5	None	Issue
<b>JOHN LEWIS/WAITROSE PARTNERSHIP MC</b>	16.9	6	2% (min £5, capped at £50)	Issue

<sup>a</sup> Available only in Northern Ireland or London if you apply at a branch

All rates correct at 29 July 2008

Information based on data supplied by moneyfacts.co.uk

# £11bn

pension annuities premiums  
paid in 2007

ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH INSURERS

## Current accounts

Every year we ask you about your current account and use the results to help choose our Best Buys. Here are our latest results. The big four banks (Barclays, HSBC, Lloyds TSB and NatWest) failed to score well again this year and were all rated below average. Smile did particularly well when it comes to customer satisfaction, with 88% of its customers saying they're very satisfied (see p16 for more).

All our Best Buys achieve at least an average rating for satisfaction and are good value, whether you are in credit or overdrawn.

## Cash Isas

It always makes sense to use up your tax-free allowance (£3,600 a year) in a Best Buy Isa before putting money into a taxable savings account. We've included only Isas that allow transfers into the account.

If you had £18,000 in Icesave's Easy Access Isa paying 6.1%, you would earn £459 a year more than with a Don't Buy Nova Isa Direct paying 3.55%, from Newcastle Building Society. The average interest rate paid on £18,000 is 5.03%.

## 0% on purchases

The cards in the table offer 0% interest on new purchases. The best offer, with Capital One Bank Platinum MasterCard, lasts until 1 November 2009. The remaining Best Buys have 0% periods of nine to 10 months.

Repay or transfer the remaining balance by the end of the 0% period to avoid high standard rates.

## Balance transfers

The table shows Best Buy balance transfer deals from Abbey, Ulster Bank and Northern Bank, offering 0% for five to six months without a transfer fee. The John Lewis/Waitrose Partnership card offers 0% for six months with a 2% transfer fee capped at £50. For larger balances, Virgin Money MasterCard offers 0% for 15 months from when the card is issued, with an uncapped transfer fee of 2.98%.

## Your money

# An end to age discrimination?

New legislation aimed at ending discrimination should stop insurers refusing to cover older motorists and travellers simply because of their age.

Introducing the Equality Bill, the Minister for Women and Equality, Harriet Harman (right), said: 'We are proposing for the first time to put into law the right of people not to be discriminated against in the provision of goods and services because they are older.' Currently, many insurers have upper age limits, above which they refuse to insure new drivers or holidaymakers.

In 2007, the charity Help the Aged found that 25% of travel policies wouldn't cover those aged 65 or over, while 73% wouldn't cover those aged 75 and over. If it becomes law, the bill will outlaw such blanket bans. Firms will still be able to use age to calculate risk, but not as the only factor. This should result in wider choice for older people and more transparent pricing. Meanwhile, older customers should continue to shop around for insurance until they find providers willing to offer them competitive rates (see 'Fifty plus', *Which?*, July 2008, p22).



## Annuities wake-up call

Holders of personal pensions should receive better information on buying an annuity, following the Association of British Insurers' development of a clearer 'wake-up' pack to be sent to those nearing retirement.

Pension providers must remind clients in writing of the 'open market option' – their right to shop around for an annuity, rather than simply staying with the same firm, as two thirds of purchasers currently do. Which? research found that moving to a Best Buy annuity can boost your retirement pension by up to 16%. For more information, see *Which?*, March 2008, p16.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### PPI comparison

The Financial Services Authority has published PPI comparison tables on its website at [www.fsa.gov.uk](http://www.fsa.gov.uk). These let you compare the cost of PPI from different providers but, for many people, income protection remains a better alternative.

#### Flood cover

Property at risk of flooding will continue to be covered, after an agreement between the government and the Association of British Insurers. The industry demanded improved flood defences to protect 517,000 homes at significant risk.

#### Defined crunch

Recent turmoil on financial markets has been recognised in the new edition of the *Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, which defines 'credit crunch' as 'a severe shortage of money or credit'.

#### TAKE ACTION!

From the beginning of October you will be able to transfer contracted-out pension savings to a self-invested personal pension (Sipp). Not everyone would benefit from this, however, so take independent financial advice before you make a move.

## OUR UNIQUE RESEARCH

### Our Best Buys

We analyse the whole market to bring you our Best Buys. With savings and loans, we recommend only companies that subscribe to the Banking Code. This means you've got protection if anything goes wrong. Like all Which? recommendations, our Best Buys are totally independent – so they're not swayed by any industry influence.

## MORE ON MONEY

### Which? Money

The September issue of *Which? Money* reveals 34 Best Buy savings accounts plus which providers give the best customer service. Try two issues for £2 at [www.which.co.uk/moneytrial](http://www.which.co.uk/moneytrial) or call 01992 822800.

