



Sending money

home?



A Survey of Remittance Products and Services
in the United Kingdom



Foreword

At the G8 summit in Sea Island in 2004, leaders of some of the world's developed nations – among them the UK – agreed that remittances need to be made more accessible and need to be made available at a lower cost. Remittances are money transfers to friends and relatives sent by people living and working in another country or town/city. Estimates of formal remittance flows throughout the world to developing countries are around the US\$70 billion mark. Remittances are not just huge in volume at the global level, they are highly significant for the livelihoods of those that receive them. Remittances can provide up to half of the budget of less well off households in developing countries, and are spent on health, education, food, consumer goods, housing, enterprises and other uses.

My department, the Department for International Development (DFID) has an active agenda to remove barriers to the flow of money transfers, lower their costs, and make access to money transfer products better for low income people. This UK Remittance Products Survey is an important part of our remittances strategy, as it provides, for the first time, comparable and accessible information on the products and services available to people wanting to send money home from the UK to developing countries. This will help to increase transparency on costs, speed of money transfer, and the coverage and customer service that banks, building societies and money transfer operators offer. In turn this will foster competition and innovation within the money transfer market to developing countries.

This report also contains findings from mystery shopping and focus group research that show very clearly what is missing from the remittance services on offer in the eyes of the people who use them. Banks, building societies and money transfer operators can learn a great deal from listening to their customers, whose voices are represented here. Prospective senders of money transfers to developing countries place the most importance on security, and tend to choose a provider they trust. Speed and cost of the transfer, and whether the transfer can be sent to somewhere accessible for the recipient in the receiving country, are the next most important considerations.

This report is the first stage in an ongoing project to make information available to consumers, the private sector, the Government and anyone else who can benefit from it. The website www.sendmoneyhome.org presents data from this report in an accessible form, including in comparative money transfer tables. For those without internet access, half a million leaflets will be distributed in the UK among the communities involved in the survey.

The UK Remittance Products Survey is the first initiative of its kind as well as a significant first step towards these goals of increasing information and lowering costs for those who need it most. I welcome the publication of the report, and encourage banks, building societies, money transfer operators, regulators and consumers alike to contribute to the project as it moves forward.



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Abbreviations found in this report:

DFID	Department for International Development	www.dfid.gov.uk
BCSB	Banking Code Standards Board	www.bankingcode.org.uk
PBI	Profile Business Intelligence	www.pbintel.com

FSA	Financial Services Authority
OFAC	Office of Foreign Assets Control

MTO	Money transfer operator
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TMT	Travelex Money Transfer
RBS	Royal Bank of Scotland
HBOS	Halifax Bank of Scotland

US\$	United States Dollar
RMB	Chinese Yuan Renminbi
GB£	Great Britain Pound

Consumers should never use any of the services mentioned here solely on the basis of the information we provide. The details provided here on money transfer products may not be entirely accurate or up to date, and are subject to change. Prices may be higher or lower than those mentioned here, and other facts may also change. It is important to note that a change in exchange rates can affect the overall cost of sending money through different providers, and consumers should always take the exchange rate into account as well as the transfer fee. Consumers should always check information with the provider before using any of the services mentioned.

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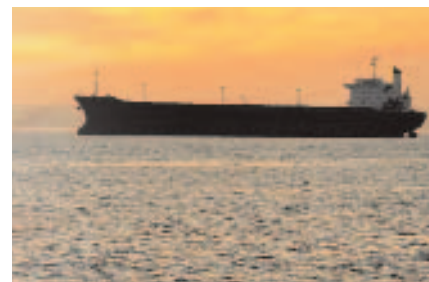
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Contents

A SURVEY OF REMITTANCE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

4	Sending money from the UK
6	Provider survey
6	Key findings
7	Provider products and services
10	Note on methodology
11	Mystery shopping
11	Key findings
12	Questions
14	Notes on methodology
14	Qualitative research
14	Key findings
14	Why people transfer money and for what purpose
16	Provider choice
20	Customer information and protection
20	Notes on methodology
21	Conclusions and recommendations
23	Service provision by country
24	Bangladesh
26	China
28	Ghana
30	India
32	Kenya
34	Nigeria
36	Appendices



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Sending money from the UK

Money sent home by migrants constitutes the second largest financial inflow to developing countries, exceeding international aid. Those receiving remittances often experience an improvement in their economic standing, whether they are family, friends or the wider community. Remittances can also promote access to financial services for the sender and recipient.

However, the products and costs of transferring money vary greatly. There is a lack of transparency in the market with information on products and costs not available in an easy or accessible format.

It is therefore difficult and time consuming to find out about the full range of options and costs prior to making a transfer. In addition to this, accessing financial services in general can pose a problem for migrants, affecting their choice of remittance service. Better information on remittance services will help migrant customers and enable their families to receive money more cheaply and with more confidence.

Due to the lack of market data, many financial services firms appear to be reluctant to develop a remittance strategy. Better awareness of the size and potential of the market may encourage them to develop more attractive and user-friendly facilities.

Along with this, a key reason for this initiative is that increased transparency and dialogue between consumers and financial services firms may help towards reducing the costs of sending remittances by fostering competition and innovation.

Better information on remittance products and costs will also help government and private sector efforts to increase the flows of remittances via formal channels (ie banks and registered money transfer operators). Creating environments conducive to increasing flows via formal channels will also increase access to other financial products such as deposit and savings accounts, thereby reducing financial exclusion.

In October 2004, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Banking Code Standards Board (BCSB) commissioned a global market research organisation (NOP World and NOP World Mystery Shopping) to carry out a programme of market research into remittance products and services in the UK. The aim was to provide baseline information on the products, costs, experiences and decision-making processes involved in sending small amounts of money from the UK to developing countries. Based on the size of the migrant groups in the

UK, and the economic situation in the receiving country, the research focused on the following countries:

- Bangladesh
- China
- Ghana
- India
- Kenya
- Nigeria

In order to build a picture of the products, costs and customer experiences of money remittances from the UK, the research comprised three approaches. These were:

- survey of remittance providers;
- qualitative group discussions among users of remittance services;
- mystery shopping at remittance provider outlets.

Key findings

- Fees for sending transfers of £100 and £500 range from £2.50 to £40.
- Key reasons for sending remittances include: everyday expenditures of families back home (food clothing etc), one-off amounts sent on an ad hoc basis, helping develop businesses back home, contributions to wider projects, and alms giving.
- Barriers to remittances include: high charges for small amounts (mainly at major high street banks and building societies), the sender or receiver not having an account (mainly at banks), too long a wait for money to arrive or collection points for remittances being in inconvenient locations.
- Security is the overriding factor in choosing a money transfer provider. Speed and cost are traded off against this. A further decision factor is the distribution network in the receiving country.
- UK banks generally pitch their remittance services at higher value customers who hold accounts with them. They offer fixed rates which tend to be higher than those offered by money transfer operators.
- UK banks and building societies are perceived as trustworthy and secure, but slow and expensive for small transfers. Banks and building societies also offer a range of other financial services in addition to money transfers.
- Transfers through banks can take between two and 10 days. Speed of transfer depends in part on the processes of the receiving bank.
- MTOs tend to offer lower rates than banks, as well as

- convenient services such as longer opening hours. They are more geared to the regular and low value service.
- Speed tends to be quicker with MTOs and generally does not depend on the receiving institution. It frequently takes less than 24 hours for a transfer to take place.
 - MTOs tend to have more extensive distribution networks.
 - MTOs are familiar with money transfers. The mystery shoppers had a more consistent and positive experience with these organisations than banks and building societies. They have better-polished, speedier procedures, more readily available literature and targeted leaflets. They tend to provide focused customer care. Assessors were more likely to use these organisations 'in real life' and recommend them to relatives and friends.
 - Customer service is generally good at country-specific banks and MTOs.
 - Most providers have a process by which they can verify the completion of the transaction, but this usually needs to be requested.
 - Providers tend to guarantee the exchange rate they offer. However they do not tend to guarantee the payout, due to potential recipient charges.
 - Most providers have customer service procedures in place to deal with problems with a remittance transfer.
 - Informal methods are viewed as cheap but risky.
 - Identification requirements are viewed as onerous, particularly at UK banks and building societies.
 - Information tends to be gained by word of mouth. Focus group participants elicited a strong desire to be able to source reliable, comparable information on the services available to them.

Methodology used

Provider survey

Between November 2004 and February 2005, the market research organisation conducted a survey of remittance providers. The aim of this survey was to provide a comparative assessment of the products and costs of UK remittance services to the six target countries. UK banks and building societies (referred to throughout as UK banks), money transfer operators (MTOs) and banks based in the six receiving countries (country-specific banks) were surveyed on their remittance products.

Written details of services were requested from banks and MTOs, based on a self-completion questionnaire, and supplemented by telephone discussions and investigation of websites and literature. Key questions for the providers included:

- cost of transfers;
- extent of branch/outlet network in the UK;
- extent of branch network in each receiving country;
- other service variables such as speed of service, regulation, opening hours, and ID requirements.

Mystery shopping

Mystery shopping involved remittance service purchase scenarios carried out by 'off the street' visits to banks, building societies and MTOs.

The mystery shopping research aimed to explore remittances from the UK to the six countries, via independent money transfer organisations, major high street banks/building societies and country-specific remittance companies.

Mystery shopping is an effective research tool for evaluating controlled scenarios and specific areas of service provision, generating objective and comparative feedback. The market research organisation used its assessors/mystery shoppers to discover:

- the experiences of the customer in trying to buy remittance services;
- how straightforward it is to send money 'home';
- how organisations differ in their approach to customers of remittance services;
- what documentation, if any, is given to customers of remittance services;
- what problems (for example language or financial jargon) customers experience when using particular remittance services;
- examples of best practice when using particular remittance services.

100 assessments were conducted between 24 December 2004 and 19 January 2005. The outlets/branches assessed were UK-spread, but randomly selected. Assessors were UK residents, and the majority had friends or relatives still living in their country of origin. Assessors used their real personal details when communicating with the service provider.

74 assessors enquired about sending money, and a further 26 actually sent money (£40 minus charges) to a friend or relative. The market research organisation had no eligible and willing assessors with relatives or friends in Kenya. As this was the case, none of the enquiries or money transfers covered this country. Enquiries were made for China and Bangladesh, but no money was sent to these countries.

Assessors requested information on remittances of £100 and £500, and if a regular sum was to be sent. The assessors carried a combination of real standard (eg passports, driving licence) and non-standard (eg photo bus passes, letters from government agencies/departments) identification. Product literature was requested by assessors and collated by the market research organisation.

The aim was to make the assessment more like an actual transaction than a basic enquiry. At the end of the detailed

enquiry, 26 assessors actually sent £40 to a relative/friend (in total and in varying currencies, minus any charges). The aim of this exercise was to evaluate how much was received, the method of collection and how long the money took to arrive.

Qualitative research

During December 2004, the market research organisation carried out qualitative research among members of the Bangladeshi, Chinese, Ghanaian, Indian, Kenyan and Nigerian communities. The aim of this research was to help develop an understanding of some key aspects of UK residents' experiences when deciding on and using remittance services, including:

- background to need for remittance services;
- the decision-making processes;
- triggers and barriers to using particular services, matched with needs;
- initial perceptions of the way that the service works, matched with reality;
- dynamics of choosing formal or informal channels.

For each target country, one group discussion and one in-depth interview was carried out with people who send money home. The latter involved an individual or couple from each country.

All participants had a broad range of remittance experiences, including provider type, frequency of remittance and amount sent. As far as was possible, within each group there was a spread of ages and a gender split. The exception to this was that all of the participants in the Bangladeshi group were men. However, an in-depth interview was carried out with a Bangladeshi woman.

1 Provider survey

In order to find out what services banks, building societies, money transfer operators (MTOs) and country-specific providers offer, a survey was carried out on their remittance products. This section sums up the responses from these financial institutions on the services available to each of the six countries. Complete findings by country can be found from page 24.

Key findings

- UK banks generally pitch their remittance services at high value customers who hold accounts with them.
- MTOs tend to offer lower rates than banks, as well as convenient services such as longer opening hours. They are more geared to the regular and low value service.
- Exchange rates show consumer/market rates rather than spot rates. Some providers were unable to provide exchange rates for the date specified on the questionnaire, and instead provided a rate for the date of completing the questionnaire. In some cases, providers are aware that

recipient fees may apply in the receiving country.

- Services are primarily through face-to-face transaction, although some providers offer internet and telephone services.
- Coverage in recipient countries is difficult to quantify for banks, as they may be able to send to a variety of partners. Some providers give names of partner correspondent organisations. Some banks have limited links with recipient countries due to risk and ethical policy.

'We use any UK, US or European bank that is enabled to get funds into this country [Ghana].' (Co-operative Bank)

- The speed of transfer tends to vary for banks, as much depends on the processes of the receiving bank. Speed tends to be quicker with MTOs and generally does not depend on the receiving institution.
- Most providers have a process by which they can verify the completion of the transaction, but this usually needs to be requested. Travelex Money Transfer has a facility where the sender receives an SMS message when the money has been paid to the receiver. As identified in the qualitative research (see page 14), customers would prefer a service that notified them of the arrival of their money.

'If a remitter queries non-receipt by the beneficiary, we investigate (by e-mail or fax) and advise customer. No charge is levied. We do not automatically advise remitters when transactions are completed.' (Sonali Bank UK)

'The remitter is provided with a reference number at counter. Automatically generated advice is sent by post to the remitter on the following day.' (Ghana International Bank)

- No provider indicates that a fee is charged to the recipient. Some suggest the recipient agent or bank may apply a fee, although UK providers are not aware of what charges can be expected. Fees may depend on the currency paid out.

'Once the funds have been converted into the currency the exchange rate is guaranteed. The final payout, however, will depend on any additional charges by agent banks over which we have no control.' Nationwide

'For Kenya the rate is guaranteed if payment is demanded in US\$. For India it is guaranteed if payment is demanded in Rupees, US\$ and Euros.' Bank of Baroda

- Providers tend to guarantee the exchange rate they offer. However, they do not tend to guarantee the payout, due to potential recipient charges. Travelex Money Transfer guarantee the payout in all countries except China.

'If we are performing the conversion to local currency or US\$, then we guarantee the rate at the time the customer requests the payment. If the customer chooses to send

GB£, and funds are converted locally, and the rate applied will be determined by the bank in the receiving country' HSBC

- Most providers have procedures in place to deal with problems with a remittance.

'We will investigate immediately - we have a customer service team that constantly monitors this. Depending on the nature of the problem we will contact our partners in the markets and tackle the situation there. We aim to provide a response on the same day and a resolution within 5 days.' Travelex Money Transfer

'The bank has a complaints redressal policy in place which is also submitted to the regulator (FSA).' Bank of Baroda

Provider products and services

UK banks and building societies:

- All 10 banks cover each of the six countries with at least one service. Barclays is notable for offering four different payment options.
- All offer electronic transfer, and seven offer remittances via bank draft.
- Only three banks mention minimum fees for electronic transfers: Citibank (£25), Lloyds TSB (£15), and Co-operative (£13). Nationwide charges flat rates of £12 for a bank draft and £20 for an electronic transfer.
- Generally money is paid out through the recipient's bank account. Most banks also offer over-the-counter cash payouts.
- For electronic transfers, the speed of service varies from two to 10 days. For bank drafts, speed depends on the recipient bank.

See table below for speed of transfer for money sent through UK banks and building societies. See page 9 for foreign branch and agent networks.

Approximately half of the providers have a mechanism for confirming the completion of the transaction to the receiver:

Speed of transfer through UK banks

Electronic transfer provider	Speed of transfer
Abbey	Up to 5 days
Barclays	Up to 8 days
Citibank	Up to 5 days
Co-operative	Up to 5 days
HBOS	3-5 days, depends on recipient bank
HSBC	Depends on local clearing/practice
Lloyds TSB	Up to 3 days
Nationwide	Depends on local clearing/practice
NatWest	Up to 5 days
RBS	Up to 5 days

Note: These times may vary depending on the type of transfer chosen with each provider, and agent/branch location in recipient country

Abbey, Citibank, Co-operative, HBOS, Lloyds TSB (for India only) and Nationwide.

All offer a counter service, mainly from 09.00 to 17.00 on weekdays. The weekend times vary according to branch location, but most are open on Saturday morning. See page 37 for full provider opening hours.

Two banks/building societies (Nationwide and Co-operative) offer an online service. Nationwide's is accessible to existing customers who have registered for internet banking, and the forms need to be printed out and posted to Head Office. Four banks provide for telephone transactions: Co-operative, Citibank, HBOS (available around the clock, 365 days a year) and Lloyds TSB. The Co-operative also offers postal and fax services.

'There is an online service for Swift payments, whereby customers can print forms from the internet and post them onto Nationwide head office for processing.' Nationwide

Costs

Transfer fees do not vary considerably between the amounts specified in our questionnaire (£100 and £500), as banks tend to charge a flat fee. Fees for both the £100 and £500 amounts vary from £10 to £30. The transfer fee accounts for a smaller percentage (from 2% to 6%) for sending £500. Full tables showing provider fees and services for transferring money (£100 and £500) to each of the six countries are shown in each country section.

Eight out of the 10 banks guarantee the exchange rate when the transfer is made, however banks will not guarantee how much will be paid out, as there are often recipient fees.

Availability of local currency transfer

Providers do not always offer local currency transfers to every country. Similarly, they may offer GB£ or US\$ transfers only in some markets. For example, regulations in Ghana mean that agents may only pay out monies in local currency.

HBOS offer local currency transfers in China, Kenya and India. Citibank only offer local currency transfers in India. Both banks offer GB£ or US\$ transfers to all countries.

Abbey offers bank drafts only to India, and electronic transfers to all six countries.

RBS and NatWest only offer local currency electronic transfers to Kenya, Bangladesh and India. Bank draft local currency transfers apply only to Kenya and India. US\$ transfers are provided to all countries.

Coverage

The total number of UK branches range from four (Citibank) to 2200 (Lloyds TSB). The main clusters are found in major urban areas such as London, Manchester and Birmingham.

Number of UK bank and building society branches

Bank	Number of UK branches
Lloyds TSB	2200
Barclays	2000
NatWest	1630
HSBC	1500
HBOS	1364
Nationwide	872
Abbey	741
RBS	642
Co-operative	100
Citibank	4

Only a few UK banks have a branch network in the six receiving countries. However, banks usually carry out remittance services via partners or correspondents. Most channels prefer not to disclose names of their partners or correspondents. Banks appear to have a strong links with correspondents/partners and some have 'exclusive deals'.

The qualitative work suggests that in some cases the lack of branch networks in receiving countries is seen as a disadvantage to customers in terms of the speed, ease or cost of transfer. Increasing coverage in recipient countries, through the use of partner banks, would greatly improve customer perceptions on these points.

Barclays is well represented in Ghana (31 branches) and Kenya (65 branches), but has little or no representation in the other countries. Correspondent relationships exist to facilitate transfers in the other countries.

HSBC has a branch network in India, China and Bangladesh. Citibank has some presence in all of the relevant countries, with the exception of Ghana.

Bank to bank transfers are conducted through partnerships with banks in the receiving countries. However, these were not well described in the banks' responses, with the exception of Lloyds TSB, which has links with ICICI Bank in India. This offers the consumer a fast, no-fee transfer.

(See country chapters for full details of UK banks' and building societies' coverage in receiving countries.)

Controls, regulations and customer service levels

In general, banks stipulate that customers must hold an account to send money overseas.

The typical ID documents required are passport, driving licence and utility bill/proof of address. ID requirements are the same for sending £100 and £500. However, banks suggest that more stringent requirements apply for larger amounts. For minimum transfer amounts requiring ID, see page 40.

Six banks (Abbey, Barclays, Citibank, HBOS, NatWest and RBS) apply other controls such as compliance approvals or OFAC (Office for Foreign Assets Control). In addition, Lloyds TSB mentions staff training and an IT alert system as extra controls.

The Financial Services Authority (FSA) and Banking Codes Standards Board (BCSB) are identified as the UK regulatory bodies, with banks and building societies regulated by the first and subscribing to the second.

Nearly half of the UK bank/building societies respondents have a customer service charter. HBOS, Nationwide and Citibank do not have a charter.

The majority of banks have a customer services facility to offer assistance should things go wrong. In addition to this, NatWest and RBS suggest that customers contact or visit the branch to resolve any issues in these circumstances.

Over half have a specific/standard customer complaints procedure. Most banks ask customers to call their customer services help desk or contact or visit the branch should they have a complaint.

Major money transfer operators

Services

All five MTOs (Chequepoint, First Remit, MoneyGram, Travelex Money Transfer and Western Union) offer cash transfers in Ghana and Nigeria. Bangladesh is least well served by the MTOs, with only MoneyGram and Western Union providing a service, and then only to larger cities.

See table below for money transfer operator services to countries in survey.

Most MTOs pay money out as cash over the counter, and most offer an instant or 24 hour service.

See table over for speed of transfer through MTOs.

Money transfer operators with services to named country

	Ghana	Kenya	Nigeria	Bangladesh	China	India
Chequepoint	✓	✓	✓		✓	
First Remit	✓		✓			✓
MoneyGram	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Travelex MT	✓		✓		✓	
Western Union	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

All MTOs can confirm the completion of the transaction to the remitter.

All offer a UK counter service. Opening times are standard for most MTOs on weekdays (09.00 to 17.00), and many offer slightly longer opening hours on Saturdays, however times may vary according to branch/location. Full opening hours details are found in the appendix.

Costs

Fees for £100 transfers vary from £3 to £14. For sending £500, the fee ranges from £4 to £37, depending on the country destination.

The majority of MTOs can guarantee the exchange rate (and sometimes the amount to be paid out), although there may be some variation between countries:

'The customer is provided with a guaranteed payout amount for all transactions (except local currency in China where regulations do not allow for this to be done). For all the other markets, the remitter will be advised how much in local currency will be paid to the receiver regardless of when they collect the money.' *Travelex Money Transfer*

No MTOs specify what fees the recipient might be charged.

See table for fees (GB£) for MTOs sending cash transfers of £100 and £500.

Availability of local currency transfer

MoneyGram do not do local currency transfers in China, where payments are in US\$. Travelex Money Transfer pays in US\$ or Niara for Nigeria, and US\$ or RMB for China.

Coverage

There are generally fewer MTO than bank outlets, and these tend to be focused in major cities. Chequepoint have 541

Speed of transfer through money transfer operators

Cash transfer provider	Speed of transfer
Chequepoint*	Up to 24 hours
First Remit	Up to 24 hours
MoneyGram	10 minutes/instant
Travelex Money Transfer	10 minutes/instant
Western Union	10 minutes/instant

* If sent by 12 noon UK time, Chequepoint cash and bank transfers arrive the same day.

Fees (GB£) for transferring money through money transfer operators

	Ghana		Kenya		Nigeria		Bangladesh		China		India	
	100	500	100	500	100	500	100	500	100	500	100	500
Chequepoint	3	15	6	21	5	25	n/a	n/a	7	11	n/a	n/a
First Remit	5	21	n/a	n/a	5	21	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	21
MoneyGram	12	36	12	36	7	25	12	20	12	22	12	20
Travelex MT	7.5	24	n/a	n/a	7.5	24	n/a	n/a	7.5	15	n/a	n/a
Western Union	12	32	14	37	12	32	12	25	12	25	4	4

Note: Fees may be lower for electronic transfer, where available. The Travelex Money Transfer loyalty scheme offers lower rates for cash transfers than those shown. n/a = No service Please note that as providers will usually offer differing exchange rates, the above figures can change.

Bank/MTO branch/agent in receiving countries

	Ghana	Kenya	Nigeria	Bangladesh	China	India
Banks						
Abbey	***	***	***	***	***	***
Barclays	31	65	***	***	1	1
Citibank	***	2	7	3	5	32
Co-operative	***	***	***	***	***	***
HBOS	***	***	***	***	***	***
HSBC	***	***	***	7	36	12
Lloyds TSB	***	***	***	***	***	**
Nat West	***	***	***	***	***	***
RBS	***	***	***	***	***	***
MTO						
Chequepoint	28	9	129	No service	5	No service
First Remit	Not known					
MoneyGram	39*	35*	215*	57*	1,116*	1,205*
Travelex MT	3	No service	228	No service	55	No service
Western Union	218	232	1,030	410	6,000	approx 100,000

* number of branches and agents **partnership with ICICI Bank Bank in India *** service through partner organisation

outlets in London. MTO outlets are less numerous outside London.

Number of branches and outlets in the UK

Some MTOs have a very strong coverage in the receiving country, sometimes in both urban and rural areas.

Travelex Money Transfer currently has distribution points in Ghana, China and Nigeria, with plans to develop into the other markets. Chequepoint has a presence in all countries except Bangladesh and India, and offer a same day transfer in Ghana and Nigeria. First Remit offers a common service to all countries, with the exception of Bangladesh and China.

See table on previous page for UK bank and MTO networks in receiving countries.

Controls, regulations and customer service levels

In contrast to banks, MTOs do not need their customers to hold accounts with them. Travelex Money Transfer stand out in terms of customer services, offering a loyalty card scheme that gives lower charges after first time use and guaranteed payout amounts to some countries.

The typical ID documents required to send any amount are passport, driving licence and utility bill/proof of address. For minimum transfer amounts requiring ID, see page 40.

All MTOs are regulated by Customs and Excise, but only one has a customer service charter.

Three types of redress are stated. These are:

- timed deadline by which the MTO must respond to a case;
- consideration on a case-by-case basis, rather than blanket response;
- refund of fee in certain cases.

Country-specific banks

Speed of transfer for the country-specific operators depends on the provider and on the transfer method.

Speed of transfer through country-specific banks.

Method of transfer	Speed of transfer
Electronic	
Bank of Baroda	Variable (depends on local clearing)
Bank of India	Variable (depends on local clearing)
Bank of China	Not stated
Remit2India	Variable (depends on local clearing)
Sonali Bank UK	1 to 4 days
State Bank of India	Variable (depends on local clearing)
Cash transfer	
ICICI Bank Bank	Up to 2 days (instant for account holders)

Note: These times may vary depending on the type of transfer chosen with each provider. See from page 11 for mystery shopping results of actual speeds of transfer.

With the exception of Samba International and Remit2India, all country-specific providers offer a UK counter service, although the extent of branch coverage varies.

Number of country-specific bank branches/outlets in the UK

Provider	Number of branches / outlets in the UK
First Remit	250
Express Funds	37
ICICI Bank Bank	34 (majority of outlets through Lloyds TSB)
Bank of Baroda	7
Bank of India	6
Bank of China	5
Samba International	5
State Bank of India	3
Ghana International bank	1
Remit2India	0

For provider opening hours, see page 38.

The main types of ID requested are passport or drivers licence. This can vary depending on the amount of money being sent. Many banks stipulate that those sending money should have an account with the banks. For minimum transfer amounts requiring ID, see page 40.

Customer service

'24/7 customer service is available in the form of online chat which is manned by live persons, SMS and email. These are the options which a customer can use to send us his [or her] query which will be attended to with a 2-3hr turn around time.' Remit2India

Note on methodology

The provider survey sourced 10 banks and building societies, five MTOs and five country-specific providers for each of the six countries involved in the survey. However, there were difficulties in establishing the relevant contacts, such as:

- lack of published information (including the internet);
- lack of an information route or established contact for remittance enquiries;
- company policy of non-participation in market research;
- no UK office or telephone number for some online services.

In some cases, information could be gathered through partners. For example, the Post Office and Thomas Cook were able to provide some information on MoneyGram over the telephone and through visits to the outlets. For UK banks, branch visits were necessary, as information was rarely available via the telephone or internet. By contrast, information was more readily accessible from MTOs, with information available from websites and by telephone. 24 completed questionnaires were returned from the 32

providers contacted, and while 10 banks and building societies and five MTOs participated, there were varying numbers of country-specific providers involved for each country.

Analysis and reporting

Providers were asked to give details of all money transfer services to each of the six designated countries.

The analysis shown in this report examines services in:

- detailed country summaries (see chapters on service provision by country);
- overall service by provider type, ie UK bank, major MTO or country-specific provider.

Sample and response rates

- A list of 32 channels was drawn up following desk research. In some countries, especially Kenya, no known channels were identified as specific to that country, and therefore the total target list of channels could not be achieved.
- Ten major UK banks and building societies responded to the questionnaire: Abbey, Barclays, Citigroup, Co-operative, HBOS, HSBC, Lloyds TSB, Nationwide, NatWest and the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS). It should be noted that NatWest and the Royal Bank of Scotland were counted as two distinct bodies.
- Five money transfer operators responded: Chequepoint, First Remit, MoneyGram, Travelex Money Transfer and Western Union.
- Seven country-specific banks responded: Bank of Baroda, Bank of China, Bank of India, State Bank of India, Ghana International Bank, ICICI Bank Bank, Sonali Bank UK and State Bank of India.
- Three other channels responded: Express Funds, Remit2India and Samba International.

2 Mystery shopping

The provider survey (above section) outlines the products and services that banks/building societies, country-specific banks and money transfer operators offer. The market research organisation then investigated 'real life' situations of using these products and services. This research was carried out in a number of ways, including face-to-face enquiries, and actually sending money to friends or relatives.

Key findings

Independent money transfer organisations are familiar with remittances and enquiries about remittances to many countries. Overall, the mystery shoppers had a more consistent and positive experience with these organisations than major high street banks and building societies. However, during fieldwork the tsunami disaster occurred (26/12/04). After this date, a large number of individuals from varying cultural backgrounds asked high street organisations about remittances to Asia. It is believed that a 'tsunami effect' may have made a difference (for example with improved customer service). Some organisations assessed offered a special discounted charge on remittances to tsunami-affected countries, such as MoneyGram (a flat rate of £5) and NatWest (free service).

Barriers to remittances would appear to be prohibitive charges for small amounts (mainly at major high street banks and building societies), the sender or receiver not having an account (mainly at banks), too long a wait for money to arrive or collection points for remittances being in inconvenient locations.

Independent money transfer operators are in the business of remittances and subsequently they appear to have much better polished, speedier procedures, have more readily available literature and offer targeted leaflets, such as

Reference used in report	Explanation of transfer
Cash	The customer gives cash to the provider, this is sent in GB£, US\$ or local currency.
Electronic	Banks provide this transfer via the established Swift system (referred to as 'wire', 'telegraphic' or 'Swift' by different banks).
Draft	A standard bank draft guarantees payment normally made by cheque, and is known as a bank or demand draft by banks. An international draft is a centrally fulfilled draft with no maximum value and can be issued in any traded currency.
IMO	One bank offers International Money Orders as an alternative to bank drafts. An IMO is a low value, point of sale instrument that is only available in two currencies (GB£ and US\$). The maximum value of an IMO is £10,000 or currency equivalent.
Other	This includes special transfer methods set up with the partner banks, for example Lloyds TSB and ICICI Bank in India.
Online	A transfer where the customer deals operates the complete process using the internet.
Telephone	A transfer with the whole process over the telephone.

'India - I'm sending so much more than money to my family' (Western Union). It was also found that they provide a more focused level of customer care and assessors said that they were more likely to use these organisations in real life and recommend them to relatives/friends than major high street banks and building societies.

Questions

What is the experience of the customer in trying to buy remittance services?

- The majority of assessors (64%) were able to obtain information about remittance services with no or little difficulty, 29% of assessors were able to obtain information but experienced a little difficulty, and the remaining 7% were unable to obtain the requested information about remittances.
- 74% of staff were knowledgeable about the options available if a customer wanted to send £100 overseas, and 75% were knowledgeable about the process if £500 was to be sent. Notably, country-specific companies were found to be more knowledgeable than other types of provider, with 77% satisfied with the member of staff's knowledge compared to 73% at MTOs and 74% at banks and building societies.
- 5% of assessors were actively dissuaded from sending money to the country enquired about. One noted, 'They said it takes weeks and I was asked if I still wanted to send it', and another, 'I was informed that to send money overseas would incur a £20 charge each time a transaction occurred. I was also advised that this charge would be applied each time I wanted to use this service. In addition, the money would take three months to arrive at its destination!'
- 15% of the service providers had a special promotion on when the assessor visited them. This figure was 32% at MTOs, 4% at UK banks, and 8% at country-specific banks. The tsunami disaster is likely to have affected the promotional activity figure. Another influence could have been seasonal offers due to religious festivals or other significant dates.
- 54% of banks/MTOs requested a passport; 39% a driving licence; 25% a photocard driving licence; 7% a photo identity card; 4% a pension/benefit book; 20% a current household bill; and 12% a document showing name and address, such as a household bill. Debit and credit cards, as well as chequebooks, were also mentioned as acceptable identification. Nine percent of banks/organisations gave a list of suitable identification to assessors.

The member of staff at the counter was able to give me generic information but she was hesitant about some of the specific issues, eg whether Halifax charged commission. She had to ask another member of staff for confirmation. They did not have a leaflet to give me though. (Halifax)

Ease of sending money home

The money transferred was to arrive via a bank account for 31% of assessors. This figure was 50% at country-specific banks, 0% at MTOs and 100% at UK banks.

15% of the assessors experienced some difficulty in actually sending money to their friend/relative. However this figure was unevenly broken down, with 50% of those using country-specific providers having problems compared to only 6% at MTOs. Examples included an assessor not being told on

How long did it take for the money to reach your friend/relative?

	All	Country-specific	MTO	UK bank
Same day	35.5%	0%	56%	0%
Next working day	19%	0%	31%	0%
2-3 working days	12%	50%	13%	0%
4-6 working days	12%	0%	0%	38%
7-10 working days	8%	0%	0%	25%
> 10 days	13.5%	50%	0%	37%

Note: The sample size was 26

their first enquiry that they would need the recipient's bank account details, and therefore having to return a further time to make a transfer (Bank of Baroda), and being told there was no money transfer service (Citibank).

At the receiving end, most relatives/friends (71%) did not experience any difficulty in receiving the money sent. However, 29% of the assessors that sent money experienced some kind of difficulty. This figure was again very high at country-specific banks, with 100% experiencing some difficulty. 14% of assessors had difficulties at UK banks, and 31% at MTOs. Three friends or relatives did not receive the money, one assessor noted that, 'My friend was told to come back on two separate occasions; this was because they were yet to receive confirmation from the UK' (Cashmo), another that, 'The recipient could not receive the money from her local branch, and had to travel a longer distance. Also, the money was not given in Dollars but Naira' (MoneyGram), and a third that, 'They were informed that anything below £100 had to be paid in the local currency and they could only receive the money at a few branches of the bank' (MoneyGram).

92% of recipients did not incur any additional charges. One assessor's relative did incur an unexpected charge (IRs 0.42) in India (Western Union). The majority of relatives/friends (74%) had to show identification before collecting the money.

The money would be available in cash from a MoneyGram agent anywhere in Mumbai. (MoneyGram at the Post Office)
How do organisations differ in their approach to customers of remittance services?

- 82% of all assessors were offered help on arrival at the bank/company

Did your friend/relative experience any problems in receiving the money sent?				
	All	Country-specific	MTO	UK bank
Yes	29%	100%	31%	14%
No	71%	0%	69%	86%

Were there any further charges to be paid by your friend/relative?				
	All	Country-specific	Money transfer operators	UK bank
Yes	8%	0%	6%	13%
No	92%	100%	94%	88%

Did your relative have to show ID in order to pick up the money?				
	All	Country-specific	Money transfer operator	UK bank
Yes	74%	0%	94%	33%
No	26%	100%	6%	67%

- 86% felt that they were given time to fully explain the particular circumstances of their request
- 54% of assessors felt that they would use the organisation assessed in real life
- 66% of assessors would recommend the service provider.

A total of 34% felt that the service was poor or very poor. Reasons ranged from staff being uninterested, ignoring questions and rushing the customer (Barclays, Lloyds TSB, MoneyGram) to speed of service being seen as too long (Barclays, HSBC, Nationwide), lack of satisfactory information or a sense of uncertainty after receiving information (Bank of Baroda, Barclays, First Remit, HSBC), lack of leaflets and business cards (Bank of India), high fees (Clydesdale, Halifax, Nationwide), or general poor customer service (Cashmo, First Bank, First Remit, MoneyGram, Western Union). Others mentioned staff lacking

Would you, 'in real life', use this bank/company to send money to a relative or friend?				
	All	Country-specific	Money transfer operator	UK bank
Yes	58%	62%	59%	56%
No	42%	38%	41%	44%

The service today was:				
	All	Country-specific	Money transfer operators	UK bank
Very good	19%	24%	30%	10%
Good	47%	46%	43%	50%
Poor	23%	15%	27%	22%
Very poor	11%	15%	0%	18%

Note: The sample size was 26, this included two country-specific, 16 independent and eight UK banks or building societies.

confidence (RBS) and lack of interest when the assessor was not an account holder (and no efforts being made to ask them to open an account – Islamic Bank of Britain and RBS).

Others had a more satisfactory experience:

To send £100 all I had to do was to turn up with my passport and the payment had to be in cash. For a fee of £12, they would make the call and I would be given a reference number, I was also advised that I could add a message if I wanted. All I had to do was to call my relative to let them know the reference number and they then had to take their passport to a MoneyGram agent and the money would be available for them to collect. (MoneyGram at Thomas Cook)

The process was quite straightforward but I had to have an account with the bank before I could engage in any transaction. The standard charges were a flat rate of £20. (Barclays)

What documentation, if any, is given to customers of remittance services?

- 55% of companies had appropriate literature about the money transfer service readily available - 68% at MTOs, 46% at UK banks and 54% at country-specific providers. The low figure for UK banks and building societies again highlights the perception that money transfer is not a key service for these companies and that information is lacking on these products.

I was given a 'Guide to International Payments: Making and receiving cross-border payments'. (Royal Bank of Scotland)

What problems [for example with language or understanding financial jargon] do customers experience when using particular remittance services?

- 96% of assessors were able to understand all of the words/terms that the member of staff used. The few problems mentioned were about the collection point for relatives/friends not being convenient, having to have an account with the bank or relatively high and perhaps prohibitive charges.

My relative would need to be an account holder in India, which many people in India are not. (Lloyds TSB)

Best practice and areas for improvement

There was no possibility to withdraw the money from a credit or debit card. Cash had to be presented for the transfer to be arranged. (MoneyGram at the Post Office)

Others found the service they were offered simple and straightforward:

The advisor was very encouraging and assured me the money would be with them within four working days. It would go straight into their account and they could pick it up in Rupees. She provided me with leaflets and a business card for future use. (NatWest)

Note on methodology

- 50 people assessed 10 banks and building societies. Branches of Barclays, Citibank, Clydesdale, Co-operative, Halifax, HSBC, Lloyds TSB, NatWest, Nationwide and Royal Bank of Scotland were visited.
- 36 assessors visited various independent organisations. Outlets for Chequepoint, First Remit, Islamic Bank of Britain, MoneyGram, Travelex Money Transfer and Western Union were visited.
- 14 people assessed country-specific banks and companies. Bangkok Bank, Bank of Baroda, Bank of China, Bank of East Asia, Cashmo (Nigeria & Ghana), First Bank (Nigeria), First Remit, Ghana International Bank, ICICI Bank Bank, Sonali Bank UK, State Bank of India, Union Bank of Nigeria and Unity Link (Ghana) were visited.

3 Qualitative research

As background to the services banks, MTOs and country-specifics offer, and the real life experience of using or trying to use these products, focus group research was undertaken. The aim of this research was to find out about the customer preferences and opinions that underpin the types of services that are currently used and the products remittance senders would ideally like to use.

Key findings

- People sending money to other countries do so for a number of reasons, including family subsistence, ad hoc contributions, business building, project building and alms giving.
- Choice of provider depends on what is required with each money transfer – some may be urgent and require speed, others may be large amounts and require security.
- Security is the overriding factor in choosing a money transfer provider. Speed and cost are traded off as a second key factor.
- A good network in the receiving country is a further key criterion.
- UK banks and building societies are perceived as

trustworthy and secure, but slow and expensive for small transfers. Country-specific banks, on the other hand, are not trusted by those from African nations but are used by those from India and Bangladesh. Country-specific banks are perceived as inefficient compared with UK banks.

- Customers felt that banks could improve customer service, including language skills and knowledge of countries to which people send remittances.
- Informal methods are viewed as cheap but risky.
- Identification requirements are viewed as onerous, particularly at UK banks and building societies. However, with adequate information, as the mystery shopping research shows, this problem appears to lessen.
- Information tends to be gained by word of mouth. Focus group participants elicited a strong desire to be able to source reliable, comparable information on the services available to them.

Why people transfer money and for what purpose

According to our focus group participants, there are a number of categories of remittance types, which determine specific needs and influence choice of provider. Choice is strongly influenced by advice from the person's UK-based community network (see appendix for further information on the cultural background to migration and remittance-sending). Security is the overriding concern when sending remittances, as the money may be going towards an urgent family need, and may also represent a large proportion of the sender's income.

Remittance types

The prevailing cultures in the receiving countries are highly collectivist in their social structures (see page 39 in appendix for further information). Financial responsibility and reward are often shared between families, extended families and even communities. In addition, there may be a considerable financial disparity between family and community members living in the UK and those in the receiving country. This results in a considerable pressure on remittance service users to send money for a variety of purposes.

These circumstances underlie a number of remittance types, which ultimately determine specific remittance needs. The main remittance types are as follows:

Family subsistence

These remittances represent the main income, or one of the main incomes, for the family in the country of origin.

'My father passed away a few months ago and now I need to take care of my siblings.' Ghanaian

'I send money to my wife and children. I have to pay for household bills and children's school fees and their monthly expenses. I have to send money on a set day every month so that they won't do without.' Bangladeshi

People sending this type of remittance are likely to have

recently arrived in this country (within the last three years). Initially, they will have depended heavily on others within their community in the UK for support and advice. They send regular payments on a monthly or bimonthly basis.

Some people sending regular payments for family subsistence may be studying in the UK, and financing remittances through part time work. These remittances may represent repayment of loans provided by family and community to finance students' travel to the UK.

Among the Ghanaian community, there are examples of students from Ghana visiting the UK for work during their university holidays, and sending their earnings back home to contribute to the family's livelihood.

Ad hoc contribution

A less regular form of family support involves sending money to families for specific needs. This money may go towards school fees, medical bills or to help avoid periodic economic hardship. There can be a considerable emotional impetus behind such remittances, due to the urgent needs of the recipients, and a sense of responsibility to the family collective.

'I send money for my brother, he doesn't have any work. He lives in my house in India. I send my brother money for his operations. I feel relaxed now, because he will look after his family.' Indian

Ad hoc contributions represent the most common form of remittance.

Business building

Those who have been settled in the UK for some time may look to their home country for business opportunities. This can be seen across the Indian, Ghanaian and Nigerian groups. Remittances of up to several thousand pounds may be sent for payment of employees and contractors. In addition, some may be property owners in their homeland, and be sending sums for maintenance and other related payments.

Project building

Despite having family, business and professional responsibilities within the UK, those who are well established in the UK often maintain strong links with their families and communities back home. This is the case particularly for Nigerians, Indians and Bangladeshis. They are likely to have fulfilled the initial aims of their migration through having amassed a certain amount of wealth in the UK, and seek to establish esteem and identity in their homeland. Projects may include building schools and roads, development of electricity and water supplies, and other contributions to local infrastructure.

'I'm sending money every month, as I own two hospitals over there, and I'm paying people.' Indian

'My village has good roads and electricity now. Most people give money for schools and mosques too.' Bangladeshi

Alms giving

There are traditions of charitable giving among all of the religious faith groups represented by the remittance service users, including Christian, Hindu and Muslim. Many send regular, small amounts of money for charitable purposes. At Ramadan and around Hindu festivals, religious communities may organise charitable collections. Christian church groups also act as a centre for planning of charitable giving. In addition to these organised efforts, individuals may send money to their own community back home, to be passed on to the poor.

Among the Indian, Bangladeshi and Nigerian communities, alms giving is equally as prevalent as ad hoc family support. The other types are less frequent overall.

These various remittance scenarios prompt a set of priorities among the senders, based on the specific needs of the recipient.

Usage and perceptions of UK banks

All the focus group participants make use of banks for a wide range of purposes, including holding a personal bank account used for salary income, direct debits and bill payments. All are dealing with their bank at least on a weekly basis, with an average of around three times per week. Many also hold mortgages with banks, and hold business accounts. Modes of accessing bank services include face-to-face, internet and telephone. Younger people take full advantage of the convenience benefits of phone and internet banking, but there is a general preference for face-to-face services among older customers. Older people fear that they might fail to make themselves understood via telephone banking, or that they might make a costly mistake through their lack of internet banking expertise.

'Some people find the accent tricky. They could make a big mistake.' Indian

In addition, there is a need among older customers for staff fluent in their own language at their local branch. This helps them feel that they are making themselves understood, thus avoiding any mistakes.

'If it's something a bit difficult, you would prefer to speak to someone in your own language.' Indian

In contrast to banks in their homeland, all feel that UK banks are trustworthy, efficient and helpful. There is an understanding that UK banks are heavily regulated and that for this reason they are unlikely to lose out financially through the actions of their bank. There are some individual reports of staff appearing to show prejudice based on their colour, but beyond this, service is seen to be highly efficient and

convenient, with fast processing and easy access to services. UK banks are trusted and their service valued overall.

'They are very secure and trustworthy, you have your money there, you don't have to worry about it.' Kenyan

Usage and perceptions of banks based in homeland

Many focus group participants hold accounts with banks based in their homeland, and these accounts may have been opened before migration to the UK, or opened in UK branches of the banks. Indians make use of accounts with the State Bank of India and Bank of Baroda for favourable savings, and to have cash for use when travelling to India. Bangladeshis almost exclusively hold accounts with Sonali Bank UK (one of the four national banks in Bangladesh) solely to send money. In addition, joint accounts may be used to finance the support of family and dependants, as well as for financing business ventures. Accounts tend to be operated in person or by letter with UK branches.

In comparison with the UK, banks based in respondents' homelands are seen as inefficient, less secure and less accessible. In particular, visiting the bank to carry out all transactions is seen as a necessity, and the expectation is of slow and unwilling service.

'In Nigeria you have to go into the bank, there's no alternative.' Nigerian

'It's like they [banks] are doing you a favour.' Ghanaian

Poor security is also seen as a disadvantage of banks across the country groups, with many saying that they do not trust that transactions are carried out safely or that their money is always safe with the bank.

In Kenya, the banks themselves are seen as fairly secure, though the charges are seen as very high.

'The joke is that you have a certain amount of money in the bank, you could go back one day and find out you have nothing, because there are so many different fees.' Kenyan

Provider choice

Across all remittance types and country groups, security is the overriding criterion for assessment of a potential provider. This is particularly the case where the remittance may be answering urgent family need, and where the remittance represents a major proportion of the sender's income. It is not assumed that all providers will ensure security, and even where security can be relied on within the UK, collection in the receiving country may not be reliable. In order to feel that a provider is secure, respondents must feel reassured that the transaction itself will be safe, and also that those collecting the money in the receiving country will be able to do so without fear of threats or corruption.

A lack of convenient collection points in the receiving country can act as a critical barrier to using particular providers. There are some reports of relatives travelling to the capital cities to receive money from the banks. In India and Ghana and to a lesser extent Nigeria, MTOs are sufficiently widespread to make this unnecessary. In Bangladesh, MTOs are not widely available, and banks are therefore more heavily used. For Kenyans, there is a good bank network, and therefore there is a general preference for banks to prevent the necessity for relatives to travel long distances with money. In the case of Chinese respondents, only informal channels (family members going home or agents 'travelling' with money) are available to those living in rural China.

Further decision-making on the choice of remittance provider is made only after the security of the provider has been assured, and is based on a trade-off between the overall cost of sending the money and on the time it will take. It is generally accepted that a fast and secure transfer will be more expensive, but people are willing to pay for the convenience.

All rely heavily on their local communities, including family and friends, for reassurance that the providers are consistent. Community recommendations are critical, as groups are highly networked in general, and many have a heritage of reliance on their communities for support and advice from when they arrived in the UK.

'When I decide to send money, the first thing I do is to get on the phone [to friends and family].' Kenyan

As well as the general tendency to use the community network to gather information, there is a perception that comparative information on providers is not readily available, and may be difficult to gather from the providers themselves.

'It's not that easy to shop around. If you ask the bank what the charges are they don't know. You have to ask a foreign exchange specialist. They don't tell you the conversion rate there and then.' Indian

This results in consumers relying on word-of-mouth networks for information, rather than using independent information seeking. In addition, those in the receiving country may provide information.

'The people receiving the money in Ghana will even tell you which shops to go to in London. They know about these things better than us.' Ghanaian

Overall, those sending money appear to trust and re-use providers if the first transactions go well. A combination of anxiety over security, a baffling market and restrictions in provider choice mean there is a tendency to stick to the provider that has been used habitually.

Remittance experiences

Security and speed of transfer are key factors in provider

choice. For this reason MTOs dominate the market for sending to countries where MTO brands are well known. By comparison, UK banks are considered highly secure but slow in sending transfers. Country-specific banks are only well trusted among Indians and Bangladeshis, and for them the poor service associated can represent a barrier.

Informal providers, in the shape of relatives and friends travelling back home, are seen as an ideal solution for some remittance types, offering security and ultimate sending and receiving convenience for no commission. In contrast, there is wariness about other informal providers in the shape of agents, such as used in 'Chop' or 'Hawala'. These are long established, informal methods of money transfer. Typically, a customer contacts a broker in his or her country, and pays them the money to be transferred. The broker then contacts a broker in the recipient's country. The recipient contacts the local Hawala or Chop dealer to collect the money.

Many have had, or know someone who has had, a bad experience. According to our research, only those who have no alternative (due to there being no transfer provider in their region at home), or are tempted by low commission rates or higher exchange rates, will take the risk.

High street MTOs

There is a strong overall awareness of high street MTOs. The most frequently mentioned is Western Union and this would appear to be the best known, with highly visible advertising and a strong presence on the high street. In addition to operating as a standalone storefront, Western Union services are also available via local off-licences, grocers and other shops. Others mentioned included MoneyGram and EuroBangla.

Word-of-mouth serves high street providers well. For Nigerians and Ghanaians, Western Union is highly visible on their own high streets as well as in the receiving countries. Chinese communities also have a high awareness of Western Union, but this is highest among those sending money to cities in mainland China or other South East Asian towns and cities. Some Indian groups mentioned Western Union. Bangladeshis have a relatively low awareness and usage of this provider, or indeed many of the other high street providers.

Accessibility of information on high street providers is thought to be good overall, with users able to obtain the required information directly from the high street outlets. It is widely accepted that proof of identification is required when sending larger amounts.

Western Union's high visibility and position as an established brand means security is not a cause for concern among its users.

Closely linked to security is the issue of trust. The frequency of use and recommendations ensure that high street

providers such as Western Union are highly trusted. The simplicity of the service also lends to its image as a trustworthy provider. However, this is not the case for smaller or unbranded high street providers where anxieties regarding security and trust are common.

Some high street providers are seen as expensive, although this is not necessarily a barrier as other key factors (such as security and speed) override this. Providers such as Chequepoint are considered cheaper.

In order for a high street provider to achieve popularity among a particular group of people, it needs to be well known in the country of origin. [NB Western Union's market share is small in Ghana as compared to some of the other countries in the survey]. The same cannot be said for Bangladesh, however, where even though Western Union has a presence in major towns (such as Sylhet, from where the vast majority of British Bangladeshis originate), the service is not often mentioned.

MTOs perform particularly well with regards to the speed with which money is transferred, varying between two hours and two days. Collection of money is also easy, with users reporting convenience of use for recipients and a good spread of outlets at the destinations.

As speed is one of the key benefits of the MTOs, they are the first choice for any urgent ad hoc family support remittances, but are also used for business building, project building and to some extent alms giving. Earners of family subsistence also use MTOs to take advantage of the benefits of speed and security.

Western Union users tend to visit the high street provider and carry out the transaction face-to-face. This can be by cash, cheque or credit card and offers the kind of flexibility that users seek. It is generally acknowledged that the service is good for senders and recipients and very little improvement is needed.

UK banks

Although everyone interviewed was aware of the UK banks for day-to-day banking services, awareness of any overseas remittance products and services is very low, with an even lower reported level of usage. Bank branch staff do not appear to have a great deal of knowledge with regards to the remittance process, and it is thought that high street banks do not promote remittance services. There is a view that banks need specialist staff with an understanding of foreign exchange issues.

Banks are often not a first choice for remittance services, partly because they do not project a culture of remittance provision. This is particularly felt among those who have low levels of literacy in English, as they do not feel they can communicate with bank staff. Similarly, there is a feeling that staff will not be able to understand them or spell the names of towns or cities in Asia or Africa.

Those interviewed commented that remittance-specific training for counter staff would encourage more users to visit UK banks.

It is also noted that, even when high street banks do offer the service, they require what is perceived as an unreasonably high level of identification and proof of identity, which adds to the stress of the process.

When judged on security, however, banks are considered as secure with regards to these remittance services as any other aspect of their service. Levels of trust are also high, especially towards branded high street banks.

However, there is a perception that the banks can be expensive, depending on the amount of money to be sent. Banks are seen as more cost-effective when sending larger amounts due to the higher basic rate. There is also confusion surrounding bank drafts and other forms of transfers but this could be explained by the lack of information provided generally.

The services that UK banks offer are perceived as being very slow, sometimes taking up to two weeks. Collecting the transferred funds is not seen as easy, as very few banks have a wide presence overseas. The exceptions to this are Barclays and HSBC, but even then their services are limited to the major cities in parts of Asia and Africa.

'If I want to send to Bombay, I'll use my UK bank. But if I want to send it to a small place, I'll use Western Union.' Indian

UK banks tend to be used by those sending large sums of money overseas. Transactions are conducted face-to-face and it is acknowledged that the process may take weeks instead of days.

'In the bank, you pay the same rate whatever the amount. In Western Union, they charge you more the more money you send.' Kenyan

In the case of banks with an international presence, there is some frustration that money transfer is not direct between accounts in the UK and back home.

'Why is it that I have an account in Barclays here, and one over there, and the two have nothing to do with each other?' Kenyan

Country-specific banks

These are very important to Bangladeshi and Indian remittance customers, mainly due to a familiarity with branches at home. Whereas Indians tend to open accounts both in the UK and in India to aid the smooth transfer of money for their investments at home, Bangladeshis will open an account solely for the purpose of sending money to their families. The same cannot be said of Ghanaians in the UK,

who, according to our focus group participants, feel that Ghanaian banks cannot be trusted.

Information regarding these banks is mainly through advertising in the minority language press and via word-of-mouth. Indeed many are already aware of the service prior to their arrival in the UK, having banked with them in the country of origin.

Users are asked to provide some evidence of holding a bank account at the bank from which they wish to send. Some banks, such as Sonali Bank UK, offer a card with a bar code detailing the sender's personal details. The card then provides the identification needed when carrying out each remittance.

Country-specific banks are generally considered safe, and are trusted overall. However, there is some concern about having to physically carry large amounts of cash from one place to another, whether in the UK or in the receiving country. Users noted that country-specific banks would only take cash, and it was therefore necessary for them to withdraw cash from their current account (usually with a UK bank) to take to their local branch of the UK-based country-specific bank. Often security is poor with customers having to queue outside because the bank is too small to accommodate everyone using the service.

While these banks can be seen as trustworthy and safe, there is also a concern that they give priority to customers sending money to national banks. One example of this is the National Bank of Bangladesh, which is regarded by some as giving high priority to customers of Sonali Bank UK, also a national bank. Therefore, money transfers take longer through providers operating via private banks in Bangladesh, as the governing national bank will tend to deal with remittances to private bank accounts once they have dealt with those to the national banks.

Country-specific banks such as Bank of Baroda and Sonali Bank UK sometimes offer low charges, but this depends on the amount being sent. The flat rate means that it provides better value for larger amounts being sent. Remittances via these banks tend to take a week, which is acknowledged as not being particularly advantageous; but this is something that is factored in to their remittance sending routine. Any disadvantages with regards to charges and timings are, however, mitigated by the positive aspects of communication with staff at these banks. Customers appreciate that the staff will be likely to speak their language or dialect and can also be familiar with the geographical place names. In addition to this, having regular face-to-face contact with the same members of staff provides reassurance. A further overwhelming advantage is the presence of these banks in the towns and cities of the country they are sending money to. Collection is easy for the recipients and there are no serious problems with money not being transferred effectively.

Nevertheless, there is a sense of anxiety about the process, with many feeling anxious until they have received a confirmation of receipt. Invariably this will involve frequent telephone calls to the recipient using phone cards bought especially for the purpose. Many would welcome a stage in the process that facilitates automatic acknowledgement of receipt from the recipient's bank.

Transactions are carried out face-to-face at the bank and involve cash rather than cheques or credit cards. The cash-only transaction is seen as a limitation and senders would prefer to have some degree of flexibility when sending money.

In addition, the service in the country-specific banks is seen as poor for those who are used to dealing with banks in the UK. The attitude of the staff is not seen as service-oriented, and this can be off-putting for some.

Like the UK banks, the perceived security advantages and improved value provided for larger amounts meant that banks are used for business building and project building. Bangladeshi family subsistence earners are also making use of country-specific banks.

Informal methods

Most interviewees knew of informal remittance methods, but were sceptical of the procedure. There is a general lack of clarity over the difference in legitimacy between less well-known high street providers and agent (eg Hawala) dealers. The two types of businesses can often appear similar to the consumer, operating from smaller shops that may also offer other products and services. There are two informal methods perceived by the consumer – using a middleman or agent, and sending money with friends and relatives travelling overseas.

There is an acknowledgment overall that there are providers on the high street that are not well known but claim to transfer money. There is, however, some confusion as to whether these organisations are legitimate operators. They tend to be specific to particular community groups and to operate in a small sphere of awareness and usage. Recommendations are usually word-of-mouth and information is gathered via the local community. There are considerable concerns among consumers surrounding the security of these providers, particularly if the provider is not well known. Where a friend, colleague or relative has recommended them, concerns are abated somewhat. However, it is acknowledged overall that this method represents a risk.

***'Some agencies end up moving a week after you sent money and you end up losing it.'* Nigerian**

Chinese users of middlemen find that charges can be high and there is a high degree of uncertainty, as they do not know the middleman personally. Levels of trust are generally low, but this is dependent on how close the person is and how well known they are to the sender.

Among some in the Kenyan group, there is a greater acceptance of informal methods, and some described these as their first port of call due to the preferential rates. A flat fee of £4 was cited, and where this method has been used repeatedly, security fears are abated.

***'I would always choose to make a phone call [to the agent] their rates are the best.'* Kenyan**

Despite the high charges and uncertainty faced, sometimes the middleman is the only choice for people from mainland China. This is particularly the case for those sending money to remote parts. This dependence is compounded by the sense of fear that some may have regarding usage of official channels. Often, they may not have bank accounts, or the proof of identity necessary for a provider such as Western Union. Indeed, there is a perception that few 'official' institutions are capable of sending money to some of the more remote villages in mainland China. Therefore, these middlemen provide a valuable service in a very short space of time, even though this is tempered with a sense of insecurity and lack of trust. For the vast majority of their users, they are the only choice.

The method of sending cash via relatives travelling overseas was mentioned by some, and is generally considered an acceptable method. To Ghanaians in particular, this is a favoured method as the process of sending the money via relatives conveys an emotional bond and gives a stronger sense of satisfaction.

***'A lot of people tend to send money back where somebody is travelling back to Ghana. The person sending it tends to have an association or relationship ... it is a shared idea of helping one another when a Ghanaian is bringing money for someone else's family. The interaction brings people together.'* Ghanaian**

Security is also high because relatives who are seen to be accountable are carrying the money. Added to this, there is no charge at all. Indeed this is a method that has been used by all new migrant communities, be they Ghanaian, Indian, Bangladeshi, Nigerian, Kenyan or Chinese.

***'When Rakhi [when male members of a family give presents to female members] comes around, I need to send my sister some money. My brother was going over, so I gave him £50 to give to her. That's it.'* Indian**

On the whole, users prefer to use relatives to send money as there are no charges involved and the money is guaranteed a safe passage. Other informal methods are used because there is perceived to be little choice in sending money to a particular region, they lack the documents required to send the money through official channels, or they are attracted by the low transfer rates or high exchange rates at a local operator.

The most frequently cited method for alms giving is by sending through a friend or relative travelling back home.

This may even be organised through groups of friends, or temple or church groups who get together and send money from a number of people through one person at particular festivals.

Some also mention having sent cheques or cash through the normal post in the past.

Customer information and protection

Overall, people tend to be highly accepting of the type and range of services that they receive, as expectations are generally low. Despite concerns over the high rates charged, there is no particular sense of frustration at the lack of choice available. Most frustration occurs among those with long experience of dealing with banks in the UK, who realise that the money transfer service offered is not as fast as they might expect, nor do their banks appear to prioritise provision of information on money transfer in comparison with other services.

Security is seen as the key remit for regulators. However, there is a general expectation that all services offered by UK banks will be well regulated, at least in security terms. Key concerns in terms of desired improvements are ID requirements and availability of comparable information.

ID requirements are considered excessively stringent, particularly where the banks are concerned. This is particularly the case where ID must be produced regardless of the amount. [See also the mystery shopping findings (previous section) on the lack of clear information given on ID requirements, with only 6% of staff informing customers that two forms of ID may be necessary.]

'I've had an account with you for ten years, you already know who I am!' Kenyan

Western Union, by comparison, is considered simple and hassle-free, with ID required only over a certain amount, and it is felt that bank customers should be entitled to a similar service.

A further cause for frustration is the lack of freely available information, particularly from banks (see also mystery shopping findings on this point). It is felt that regulators could make information more openly available, for example at branches, allowing people to shop around based on solid information on rates and commission. Also, there is a desire to see published comparative information on charges and rates. It was suggested that these rates could be provided in leaflet form and distributed through travel agents and other community shops.

A further issue suggested for the attention of regulators was a system of authentication for smaller high street providers, so that consumers are able to differentiate between legitimate independent MTOs and illegal providers.

Note on methodology

Except for the newest of arrivals, all focus group participants hold accounts with high street banks in the UK, and feel that they are highly secure and efficient, particularly in comparison to banks based in their homeland.

It should be noted that all of the focus group participants held a bank account. The research findings therefore cannot reflect the experiences and views of those who do not currently hold a bank account.

Conclusions and recommendations

Information

There is a perceived lack of information available for those wanting to send money home. Customers do not feel they have enough information about money transfer products, providers, or ID requirements, and do not know where to look for the information they need. They therefore rely on word-of-mouth.

A crucial need is for comparative, independent information about the remittance services that are available, in order for consumers to be able to come to a rational, factually informed and independent decision on which service to use.

This report has led to the creation of a website and leaflets containing easily accessible and comparable information on available services. This information can be found at www.sendmoneyhome.org and in leaflets distributed among the communities involved in the survey. Information on provider websites should also be improved, as should scope for online remittance services.

Choice of provider

Services required from remittance providers tend to vary based on the type of remittance a user sends. The final purpose of the remittance determines the urgency. Speed and cost are traded-off against one another. These are the key areas of product attributes for providers to work on. Security and trust are overriding concerns. This trust is brought about through word-of-mouth testimony from friends and relatives, or through the ubiquity of a brand name. Provider choice is limited by the coverage of branch outlets in the receiving country, as well as the location of outlets in the UK. An improved branch presence or partnership networks in receiving countries would make banks a more viable competitor to the MTOs.

Current provider preference

In terms of provider use, MTOs were cited as the type of provider used most often within the focus groups. This is because, in addition to providing security through well-known brand names, they have a strong presence in the UK and in receiving countries. Overall, the mystery shoppers had a more consistent and positive experience with these organisations than with the major high street banks and building societies and the country-specific providers.

The provider survey shows that MTOs offer relatively favourable rates – particularly for African countries and for people sending smaller amounts. They are also seen to offer speed and convenience, in conjunction with trusted brand names.

Banks have an advantage with regards to issues of security and trust. There is a strong synergy between the key needs of the money transfer consumer, and the UK banks' brands. However, the lack of easily accessible information, perceived

slow service and stringent ID requirements means that the banks are not able to effectively harness this synergy.

Small, urgent transfers are a common remittance type, yet banks and building societies are perceived as costly and slow. This is reflected in the provider survey data, with banks appearing to take longer overall than MTOs to send money. MTOs tend to be able to send money within 24 hours to each of the countries, whereas for banks the average time taken is five days. As the focus groups indicate, timing can be a significant decision factor for remittance senders.

Bank rates are relatively high (in percentage terms) for low-value, high-frequency transactions, but tend to become more favourable when larger amounts are being sent. Variable fees depending on the amount to be transferred, as well as speedier fulfilment processes, would make banks a more attractive alternative to MTOs for urgent, low value transfers.

Banks frequently request that the money sender is an account holder.

For both sender and recipient, country-specific banks (eg Indian or Ghanaian banks with branches in the UK) are often seen as slow and inconvenient to use. However, many Indians and Bangladeshis hold accounts with the country-specific banks, due to familiarity, supposed ease of communication, or tailored products. The provider survey shows that there can be variation in the speed of transfer through country-specific banks, and this often depends on the recipient's location in that country. Overall, findings suggest that where both sender and recipient hold an account with the bank, the process is faster than if there is only one account holder.

Focus group participants noted that country-specific banks would only take cash, and it was therefore necessary to withdraw cash from their current account (usually with a UK bank) to take to their local branch of the UK-based country-specific bank. Often security is poor with customers having to queue outside because the bank is too small to accommodate everyone using the service. This should be addressed to improve the perception of country-specific channels.

People often send money home through informal channels, such as with friends or family members who are travelling back to the country of origin. Although sending money through agents is also said by focus group participants to be common. Informal methods are seen as cheap but risky. Formal providers have scope to attract users of informal remittance services if their products are appropriately designed and priced. These systems rely on trust and the extensive use of connections, such as regional affiliations, to move money.

Customers are confused about the legitimacy of some high

street providers. Customers suggested that regulators set up a system of authentication for smaller high street providers, so that consumers are able to differentiate between legitimate independent MTOs and illegal providers.

Remittance senders often rely on word-of-mouth. It is therefore important that banks, building societies and MTOs increase awareness of their products and the information they make available.

Customer service

The mystery shopping and qualitative findings suggest that UK banks and building societies, and country-specific providers should consider the value in comprehensively servicing the needs of individuals who want money transfer services.

UK banks and building societies do not appear to promote their money transfer services widely. Their customer service is seen as being very good generally, but their knowledge is weaker than that of MTOs when it comes to remittance services. Banks in particular are not seen to address culturally specific requirements, and should train their staff to consider the needs of customers in areas with a large number of residents from a particular ethnic group or speaking a particular language.

Although there are factors that discourage use of country-specific banks, for example bureaucracy and speed, these banks provide the advantage of cultural understanding and language skills. Customers appreciate that the staff will be likely to speak their language or dialect and can also be familiar with geographical place names. In addition to this, having regular face-to-face contact with the same members of staff provides reassurance. This is a major advantage for older people and those who have recently arrived in the UK, and would be a welcome addition to UK banks' services. However country-specific banks clearly have a long way to go in order to turn these potential advantages into reality.

Customer service is perceived as better at MTOs. The mystery shopping shows that independent MTOs are familiar with remittances and enquiries about remittances to many diverse countries. Good customer service is crucial.

Customers need to know that the money has been received. An appropriate service improvement would be to offer free confirmation on all transactions, whether this is by email, text SMS or telephone call.

Identification needs

Identification requirements stipulated by UK banks and building societies are seen by focus group participants as at best as an inconvenience, and there was evidence to suggest that this factor would influence consumers' choice of provider. However, mystery shopping experiences suggested that when customers were informed of the reasons for ID requirements and what documentation they

could use, the requirements were not viewed as a particular problem.

The perceived requirement by most banks to provide a passport, driver's licence and utility bill is a particular source of frustration where an account is already held at the bank. Several assessors were told that ID was not required of existing account holders for sending small amounts of money, as the banks already knew who they were.

This level of confusion around ID indicates a strong need for work by banks and MTOs to increase financial literacy and to make their ID needs understood.

Comparing services

The need for security means that there is a strong reliance on word-of-mouth networks for advice on providers, and friends and family will be a first port of call for this information. Independent information seeking is less common.

A crucial need is for comparative, independent information about the remittance services that are available, in order for consumers to be able to come to a rational, factually informed and independent decision on which service to use.

SERVICE PROVISION FOR EACH COUNTRY

Each country summary follows the same format (provider coverage, services offered, costs, etc); there is therefore some repetition. However, fees for sending money to each country, through different services offered, frequently differ.

Each country section includes tables outlining costs of sending £100 and £500 through various providers. Below is the key to the different transfer techniques.

CT - cash transfer

Customer pays in cash to provider and this is received in local currency

ES - electronic/Swift

Banks provide this transfer via the established Swift system (often called 'wire', 'electronic' or 'telegraphic')

Tel - telephone

Transfer with the whole process over the telephone

BD - bank draft

A standard bank draft guarantees payment, and is known as a bank or demand draft by banks

LC - loyalty card

Customers can ease future transfers using with providers offering a loyalty card, as this becomes their identification

IMO - international money order

An alternative to a draft, an IMO is a low value point of sale instrument that is only available in GB£ or US\$

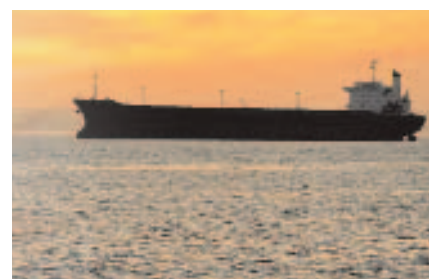
Online

A transfer where the customer deals with the process over the internet

PES - priority electronic/Swift

EES - express electronic/Swift

MT - mail transfer



Bangladesh

Services

Among those that participated in the survey, 13 providers offer a service to Bangladesh:

- UK banks/building societies: Abbey, Barclays, Citibank, HBOS, Co-operative, HSBC, Nationwide, Lloyds TSB, NatWest, Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS)
- Money transfer operators: MoneyGram, Western Union
- Country-specific channels: Sonali Bank UK.

Banks tend to offer electronic (telegraphic) payments via Swift or bank draft payments. Barclays offer four different payment options, including an International Money Order (IMO) service in GB£ or US\$. The money transfer operators tend to offer cash transfers.

Minimum transfer amounts and fees

Most high street banks allow remittances of any amount over £1 via electronic transfer, with no minimum fee. Minimum fees apply for Citibank (£25), Barclays (£20), Lloyds TSB (£15), and Co-operative (£13). Nationwide charges flat rates of £12 for a bank draft and £20 for an electronic transfer.

Money transfer operators (MTOs) also have a minimum transfer amount of £1, and tend to stipulate a minimum fee: MoneyGram (£12) and Western Union (£8).

Payout options

For UK banks sending electronic transfers, remittances are generally paid directly into the recipient's bank account. For MTOs, recipients collect cash at the counter. Sonali Bank can pay out in cash, draft or electronic payment.

Speed of transfer

The speed of transfer varies from instant to 24 hours for cash transfers by MTOs, and takes from two to 10 days for electronic transfers by banks. Sonali Bank UK takes from one to four days to transfer funds. The speed of transfer may vary for some banks, as it can depend on the procedures of the receiving bank.

Please see comparative tables (appendix on page 36) for full details on speed of transfer by provider.

Confirming completion of transaction to remitter

Most banks and all MTOs are able to confirm the completion of a remittance. However, only a minority of survey respondents described how this confirmation takes place. MTOs often provide an online service for customers to check the status of a transaction.

NatWest and Royal Bank of Scotland are unable to provide confirmation, and HSBC and Lloyds TSB did not respond to this question.

Provision of a UK counter service

Almost all providers offer a UK counter service. Weekday opening hours are generally 09.00 to 17.00 for banks and variable times for MTOs. Saturday and Sunday opening hours depend on provider and individual branch.

Please see comparative tables (appendix on page 36) for details on provider opening times.

Non face-to-face methods for transferring money

Four UK banks (HBOS, Citibank, Lloyds TSB and Co-operative) offer a telephone transaction service. Two UK banks/building societies (Nationwide and Co-operative) provide an online remittance facility. The Co-operative also offers postal and fax services.

Transfer fees and exchange rates for £100 and £500

For electronic payments, the transfer fee ranges from £5 to £30 for both £100 and £500 transfers. For cash transfers the fee is between £2.50 and £12 to send £100, and between £6.25 and £25 to send £500 (see tables).

At the time of research, the exchange rate for local currency varied between 111.90 and 116.09 Bangladesh Taka to GB£. For US\$, the rate ranged from 1.8656 to 1.9325. It is important to note that the variance in exchange rates can affect the overall cost of sending money through different providers, and consumers should always take the exchange rate into account as well as the transfer fee.

No provider indicates that a fee is charged to the recipient, although some suggest that the recipient agent or bank may apply a fee.

Guarantee of exchange rate and payout

The majority of providers guarantee the exchange rate they offer but, due to potential charges to the recipient, do not guarantee the amount that will be paid out.

Coverage in the UK and Bangladesh

Providers vary considerably in their UK coverage, from just one branch or outlet up to 4000 (MoneyGram). The highest concentration of outlets is in London. Other important locations are Birmingham and Glasgow. Three providers disclose details of distribution networks: Citibank (three), MoneyGram (57 outlets, this includes through branches of NCC Bank and Agrabad Money

Exchange Co) and Sonali Bank (1200). About half of the providers give names of partner correspondent organisations but do not disclose details of distribution points.

Please see comparative tables (appendix on page 36) for details on provider outlets.

Controls, regulations and customer service levels

Most UK banks require the customer to be an account holder in order to send money. This generally does not apply to MTOs although Travelex Money Transfer do offer an option for loyalty card users.

ID may be necessary for sending any amount and two types of ID (one with proof of address) should always be taken when remitting money.

All UK banks are regulated by the Financial Services Authority and are registered with the Banking Code Standards Board, and all MTOs are registered with Customs and Excise.

Complaints and redress procedures

If there are any problems with a transfer or in cases where things go wrong, customer assistance via a dedicated customer helpdesk/team, a general customer services call centre, or contact with a branch or agent may be available.

If a customer registers a complaint, some providers (mainly UK banks) offer a complaints procedure. Others offer help via telephone or post (UK banks) or advise visits to a branch or agent (MTOs).

If a customer is not able to settle a problem with the financial institution, the procedure would be to approach the Financial Ombudsman.

Money transfer fee by provider for £100

Provider	Method of transfer	Transfer fee (£)	Fee as % of amount
Sonali Bank UK	CT	£2.5	2.5
HBOS	BD	£7	7
NatWest	BD	£8	8
Royal Bank of Scotland	BD	£8	8
Barclays	IMO	£8	8
Nationwide	BD	£12	12
MoneyGram	CT	£12	12
Western Union	CT	£12	12
Co-operative	BD	£13	13
Co-operative	ES	£13	13
HBOS	ES	£14	14
Barclays	BD	£15	15
HSBC	BD	£15	15
NatWest	ES	£18	18
Royal Bank of Scotland	ES	£18	18
Barclays	ES	£20	20
Nationwide	ES	£20	20
Lloyds TSB	ES	£20	20
HSBC	ES	£21	21
Abbey	ES	£25	25
Citibank	ES	£30	30
Barclays	PES	£35	35

NB: 1) Some companies require that you send a minimum amount through their services.
2) As exchange rates offered by each provider will usually be different, please be aware that the ranking order above may change slightly.

Money transfer fee by provider for £500

Provider	Method of transfer	Transfer fee (£)	Fee as % of amount
Sonali Bank UK	CT	£6.25	1.25
Barclays	IMO	£8	1.6
HBOS	BD	£11	2.2
Nationwide	BD	£12	2.4
Co-operative	ES	£13	2.6
Co-operative	BD	£13	2.6
HBOS	ES	£14	2.8
Barclays	BD	£15	3
NatWest	ES	£18	3.6
NatWest	BD	£18	3.6
Royal Bank of Scotland	BD	£18	3.6
Royal Bank of Scotland	ES	£18	3.6
Barclays	ES	£20	4
Nationwide	ES	£20	4
HSBC	BD	£20	4
Lloyds TSB	ES	£20	4
MoneyGram	CT	£20	4
HSBC	ES	£21	4.2
Abbey	ES	£25	5
Western Union	CT	£25	5
Citibank	ES	£30	6
Barclays	PES	£35	7

NB: 1) Some companies require that you send a minimum amount through their services.
2) As exchange rates offered by each provider will usually be different, please be aware that the ranking order above may change slightly.

China

Services

Among those that participated in the survey, 15 providers offer a service to China:

- UK banks/building societies: Abbey, Barclays, Citibank, HBOS, Co-operative, HSBC, Nationwide, Lloyds TSB, NatWest, Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS)
- Money transfer operators: Chequepoint, MoneyGram, Travelex Money Transfer, Western Union
- Country-specific channels: Bank of China.

Banks tend to offer electronic (telegraphic) payments via Swift or bank draft payments. Barclays offer four different payment options, including an International Money Order (IMO) service in GB£ or US\$. The money transfer operators tend to offer cash transfers.

Minimum transfer amounts and fees

Most high street banks allow remittances of any amount over £1 via electronic transfer, with no minimum fee. Minimum fees apply for Citibank (£25), Barclays (£20), Lloyds TSB (£15), and Co-operative (£13). Nationwide charges flat rates of £12 for a bank draft and £20 for an electronic transfer.

Money transfer operators (MTOs) also have a minimum transfer amount of £1, and tend to stipulate a minimum fee: MoneyGram (£12), Chequepoint (£7), Travelex Money Transfer (£7.50 or £7.13 with a loyalty card) and Western Union (£8). Chequepoint charge a flat rate of £5 for any bank transfer.

Bank of China charges a minimum fee of £15.

Please see comparative tables for details on transfer fees.

Payout options

For UK banks sending electronic transfers, remittances are generally paid directly into the recipient's bank account. For MTOs, recipients collect cash at the counter. In China, Travelex Money Transfer can also credit a recipient's ATM card.

Speed of transfer

The speed of transfer varies from instant to 24 hours for cash transfers by MTOs, and takes from two to 10 days for electronic transfers by banks. The speed of transfer may vary for some banks, as it can depend on the procedures of the receiving bank. Please see comparative tables (appendix on page 36) for full details on speed of transfer by provider.

Confirming completion of transaction to remitter

Most banks and all MTOs are able to confirm the completion

of a remittance. However, only a minority of survey respondents described how this confirmation takes place. MTOs often provide an online service for customers to check the status of a transaction.

NatWest and RBS are unable to provide confirmation, and HSBC and Lloyds TSB did not respond to this question.

Provision of a UK counter service

Almost all providers offer a UK counter service. Weekday opening hours are generally 09.00 to 17.00 for banks and variable times for MTOs. Weekend opening hours vary on Saturdays. Many MTOs are open on Sunday, and are often busy due to the unsociable working hours of those sending money. Please see comparative tables (appendix on page 36) for details on provider opening times.

Non face-to-face methods for transferring money

Four UK banks (HBOS, Citibank, Lloyds TSB and Co-operative) offer a telephone transaction service. Two UK banks/building societies (Nationwide and Co-operative) provide an online remittance facility. The Co-operative also offers postal and fax services.

Transfer fees and exchange rates for £100 and £500

For electronic payments, the transfer fee ranges from £5 to £35 for both £100 and £500 transfers. For cash transfers the fee is between £3.50 and £12 to send £100, and between £11.50 and £25 to send £500.

At the time of research, the exchange rate for local currency varied between 14.78 and 16.03 RMB to the GB£. For US\$, the rate ranged from 1.8656 to 1.9325. It is important to note that the variance in exchange rates can affect the overall cost of sending money through different providers, and consumers should always take the exchange rate into account as well as the transfer fee.

No provider indicates that a fee is charged to the recipient, although some suggest the agent or bank may apply a fee.

Guarantee of exchange rate and payout

The majority of providers guarantee the exchange rate they offer but, due to potential charges to the recipient, do not guarantee the amount that will be paid out.

Coverage in the UK and China

Providers vary considerably in their UK coverage, from just one branch or outlet up to 4000 (MoneyGram). The highest concentration of outlets is in London. Other important locations are Birmingham and Glasgow.

Travelex Money Transfer has a partnership with China Construction Bank and China Union Pay, which operate approximately 10,000 distribution points. MoneyGram has over a thousand outlets, this includes through branches of Bank of Communications, Industrial & Commercial Bank and Citic Industrial Bank. About half of the providers give names of partner correspondent organisations but do not disclose details of distribution points. Please see comparative tables (appendix on page 36) for details on provider outlets.

Controls, regulations and customer service levels

Most UK banks require the customer to be an account holder in order to send money. This generally does not apply to MTOs although Travelex Money Transfer do offer an option for loyalty card users.

ID may be necessary for sending any amount and two types of ID (one with proof of address) should always be taken when remitting money.

All UK banks are regulated by the Financial Services Authority and are registered with the Banking Code

Standards Board, and all MTOs are registered with Customs and Excise.

Complaints and redress procedures

If there are any problems with a transfer or in cases where things go wrong, customer assistance via a dedicated customer helpdesk/team, a general customer services call centre, or contact with a branch or agent may be available.

If a customer registers a complaint, some providers (mainly UK banks) offer a complaints procedure. Others offer help via telephone or post (UK banks) or advise visits to a branch or agent (MTOs).

If a customer is not able to settle a problem with the financial institution, the procedure would be to approach the Financial Ombudsman.

Money transfer fee by provider for £100

Provider	Method of transfer	Transfer fee (£)	Fee as % of amount
Chequepoint	BD	£5	5
Chequepoint	CT	£7	7
HBOS	BD	£7	7
Travelex Money Transfer	LC	£7.13	7.13
Travelex Money Transfer	CT	£7.5	7.5
Barclays	IMO	£8	8
NatWest	BD	£8	8
Royal Bank of Scotland	BD	£8	8
Nationwide	BD	£12	12
MoneyGram	CT	£12	12
Western Union	CT	£12	12
Co-operative	ES	£13	13
Co-operative	BD	£13	13
HBOS	ES	£14	14
Barclays	BD	£15	15
HSBC	BD	£15	15
Bank of China	BD	£15	15
Bank of China	ES	£15	15
NatWest	ES	£18	18
Royal Bank of Scotland	ES	£18	18
Barclays	ES	£20	20
Nationwide	ES	£20	20
Lloyds TSB	ES	£20	20
HSBC	ES	£21	21
Abbey	ES	£25	25
Citibank	ES	£30	30
Barclays	PES	£35	35
Bank of China	EES	£35	35

NB: 1) Some companies require that you send a minimum amount through their services.
2) As exchange rates offered by each provider will usually be different, please be aware that the ranking order above may change slightly.

Money transfer fee by provider for £500

Provider	Method of transfer	Transfer fee (£)	Fee as % of amount
Chequepoint	BD	£5	1
Barclays	IMO	£8	1.6
HBOS	BD	£11	2.2
Chequepoint	CT	£11	2.2
Nationwide	BD	£12	2.4
Co-operative	ES	£13	2.6
Co-operative	BD	£13	2.6
Travelex Money Transfer	LC	£15	3
HBOS	ES	£15	3
Barclays	BD	£15	3
Travelex Money Transfer	CT	£15	3
Bank of China	BD	£15	3
Bank of China	ES	£15	3
NatWest	ES	£18	3.6
NatWest	ES	£18	3.6
Royal Bank of Scotland	BD	£18	3.6
Royal Bank of Scotland	ES	£18	3.6
Barclays	ES	£20	4
Nationwide	ES	£20	4
HSBC	BD	£20	4
Lloyds TSB	ES	£20	4
HSBC	ES	£21	4.2
MoneyGram	CT	£22	4.4
Abbey	ES	£25	5
Western Union	CT	£25	5
Citibank	ES	£30	6
Barclays	PES	£35	7
Bank of China	EES	£35	7

NB: 1) Some companies require that you send a minimum amount through their services.
2) As exchange rates offered by each provider will usually be different, please be aware that the ranking order above may change slightly.

Ghana

Services

Among those that participated in the survey, 18 providers offer a service to Ghana:

- UK banks and building societies: Abbey, Barclays, Citibank, HBOS, Co-operative, HSBC, Nationwide, Lloyds TSB, NatWest, Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS)
- Money transfer operators: Chequepoint, First Remit, MoneyGram, Travelex Money Transfer, Western Union
- Country-specific channels: Ghana International Bank, Express Funds, Samba International.

Banks tend to offer electronic (telegraphic) payments via Swift or bank draft payments. Barclays offer four different payment options, including an International Money Order (IMO) service in GB£ or US\$. The money transfer operators tend to offer cash transfers.

Minimum transfer amounts and fees

Most high street banks allow remittances of any amount over £1 via electronic transfer, with no minimum fee. Minimum fees apply for Citibank (£25), Barclays (£20), Lloyds TSB (£15), and Co-operative (£13). Nationwide charges flat rates of £12 for a bank draft and £20 for an electronic transfer.

MTOs also have a minimum transfer amount of £1, and tend to stipulate a minimum fee, for example MoneyGram (£12), Chequepoint (£3), Travelex Money Transfer (£7.50, or £7.13 with loyalty card) and Western Union (£8). Chequepoint charge a flat rate of £5 for any bank transfer.

Samba International and Ghana International stipulate minimum transfer fees (£3 and £5 respectively), but in both cases there is no minimum transfer amount.

Please see comparative tables for full details on transfer fees.

Payout options

For UK banks sending electronic transfers, remittances are generally paid directly into the recipient's bank account. For MTOs, recipients collect cash at the counter. Ghana International Bank, Samba International and Express Funds offer both of the above options.

Speed of transfer

The speed of transfer varies from instant to 24 hours for cash transfers by MTOs, and from two to 10 days for electronic transfers by banks. Country-specific channels (eg Express Funds) transfer in up to 24 hours. The speed of the transfer may vary for some banks, depending on the

procedures of the receiving bank. Please see comparative tables (appendix on page 36) for full details on speed of transfer by provider.

Confirming completion of the transaction to the remitter
Most banks and all MTOs are able to confirm completion. However only a minority of survey respondents described how this confirmation takes place. MTOs often have an online service for customers to check the status of a transaction.

Provision of a UK counter service

All providers offer a UK counter service, with the exception of Samba International. During weekdays, the availability of this service tends to be from 09.00 to 17.00 for banks. Saturday and Sunday opening hours depend on provider and individual branch. Please see comparative tables (appendix on page 36) for full details on speed of transfer by provider.

Non face-to-face methods for transferring money

Four UK banks (HBOS, Citibank, Lloyds TSB and Co-operative) and one country-specific bank (Samba International) offer a telephone transaction service. Two UK banks/building societies (Nationwide and Co-operative) and one country-specific channel (Ghana International Bank) provide an online remittance facility. Nationwide's is accessible to existing customers who have registered for internet banking, and the forms need to be printed out and posted to Head Office. The Co-operative also offers postal and fax services.

Transfer fees for £100 and £500

For electronic transfers, the transfer fee ranges from £5 to £30 for both £100 and £500 transfers. For MTOs making cash transfers the fee varies from £3 and £12 to send £100, and £15 to £36 to send £500. Please see comparative tables (appendix on page 36) for full details of costs. No provider indicates that a fee is charged to the recipient, although some suggest that the recipient agent or bank may apply a fee.

Guarantee of exchange rate and payout

The majority of providers guarantee the exchange rate they offer but, due to potential charges to the recipient, do not guarantee the amount that will be paid out.

Coverage in the UK and Ghana

Providers vary considerably in their UK coverage, from just one branch or outlet to up to 4000 (MoneyGram). The highest concentration of branches is in London (where providers have almost 550 branches or outlets). Other important locations are Birmingham and Glasgow. Some providers gave details of partner banks or outlets in

Ghana. Travelex Money Transfer had three outlets at the time of the survey, and anticipated almost 130 by the end of the first quarter of 2005. Chequepoint has 28 outlets and Barclays 31 branches. MoneyGram has 39 outlets in Ghana (this number includes outlets through SSB Bank branches). Five providers (including three MTOs) gave names of partner organisations but did not disclose specific details of these partner networks. Travelex Money Transfer have a partnership with the International Commercial Bank in Ghana, and use TCF in the UK as one of their main Ghanaian transfer agents. Please see comparative tables (appendix on page 36) for details of provider outlets.

Controls, regulations and customer service levels

Most UK banks require the customer to be an account holder in order to send money. This does not apply to MTOs or country-specific channels such as Ghana International, although Travelex Money Transfer offer an option for loyalty card users.

ID may be necessary for sending any amount of money and two types of ID (one with a proof of address) should always be taken when remitting money.

Money transfer fee by provider for £100

Provider	Method of transfer	Transfer fee (£)	Fee as % of amount
Chequepoint	CT	£3	3
Samba International	Tel	£3	3
Express Funds	CT	£3	3
First Remit	CT	£5	5
Chequepoint	BD	£5	5
Ghana International Bank	ES	£5	5
HBOS	BD	£7	7
Travelex Money Transfer	LC	£7.13	7.13
Travelex Money Transfer	CT	£7.5	7.5
Barclays	IMO	£8	8
NatWest	BD	£8	8
Royal Bank of Scotland	BD	£8	8
Nationwide	BD	£12	12
MoneyGram	CT	£12	12
Western Union	CT	£12	12
Co-operative	ES	£13	13
Co-operative	BD	£13	13
HBOS	ES	£14	14
Barclays	BD	£15	15
HSBC	BD	£15	15
NatWest	ES	£18	18
Royal Bank of Scotland	ES	£18	18
Barclays	ES	£20	20
Nationwide	ES	£20	20
Lloyds TSB	ES	£20	20
HSBC	ES	£21	21
Abbey	ES	£25	25
Citibank	ES	£30	30
Barclays	PES	£35	35

NB: 1) Some companies require that you send a minimum amount through their services.
2) As exchange rates offered by each provider will usually be different, please be aware that the ranking order above may change slightly.

All UK banks are regulated by the Financial Services Authority and are registered with the Banking Code Standards Board, and all MTOs are registered with Customs and Excise.

Complaints and redress procedures

If there are any problems with a transfer or in cases where things go wrong, customer assistance via a dedicated customer helpdesk/team, a general customer services call centre, or contact with a branch or agent may be possible.

If a customer registers a complaint, some providers (mainly UK banks) offer a complaints procedure. Others offer help via telephone or post (UK banks) or advise visits to a branch or agent (MTOs).

If a customer is not able to settle a problem with the financial institution, the procedure would be to approach the Financial Ombudsman.

Money transfer fee by provider for £500

Provider	Method of transfer	Transfer fee (£)	Fee as % of amount
Chequepoint	BD	£5	1
Barclays	IMO	£8	1.6
HBOS	BD	£11	2.2
Nationwide	BD	£12	2.4
Co-operative	ES	£13	2.6
Co-operative	BD	£13	2.6
HBOS	ES	£14	2.8
Barclays	BD	£15	3
Chequepoint	CT	£15	3
Samba	IT	£15	3
Express Funds	CT	£15	3
NatWest	ES	£18	3.6
NatWest	ES	£18	3.6
Royal Bank of Scotland	ES	£18	3.6
Royal Bank of Scotland	BD	£18	3.6
Barclays	ES	£20	4
Nationwide	ES	£20	4
HSBC	BD	£20	4
Lloyds TSB	ES	£20	4
Ghana International Bank	ES	£20	4
HSBC	ES	£21	4.2
First Remit	CT	£21	4.2
Travelex Money Transfer	LC	£23	4.6
Travelex Money Transfer	CT	£24	4.8
Abbey	ES	£25	5
Citibank	ES	£30	6
Western Union	CT	£32	6.4
Barclays	PES	£35	7
MoneyGram	CT	£36	7.2

NB: 1) Some companies require that you send a minimum amount through their services.
2) As exchange rates offered by each provider will usually be different, please be aware that the ranking order above may change slightly.

India

Services

Among those that participated in the survey, 18 providers offer a service to India:

- UK banks/building societies: Abbey, Barclays, Citibank, HBOS, Co-operative, HSBC, Nationwide, Lloyds TSB, NatWest, Royal Bank of Scotland
- Money transfer operators: First Remit, MoneyGram, Western Union
- Country-specific channels: Bank of Baroda, Bank of India, ICICI Bank, State Bank of India, Remit2India.

Banks tend to offer electronic (telegraphic) payments via Swift or bank draft payments. Barclays offer four different payment options, including an International Money Order (IMO) service in GB£ or US\$. The money transfer operators tend to offer cash transfers.

Minimum transfer amounts and fees

Most high street banks allow remittances of any amount over £1 via electronic transfer, with no minimum fee. Minimum fees apply for Citibank (£25), Barclays (£20), Lloyds TSB (£15), and Co-operative (£13). Nationwide charges flat rates of £12 for a bank draft and £20 for an electronic transfer.

Money transfer operators (MTOs) also have a minimum transfer amount of £1, and tend to stipulate a minimum fee: MoneyGram (£7) and Western Union (£8). Remit2India charges a £5 minimum fee and Bank of Baroda £10 for a bank draft, £15 for a mail transfer and £30 for electronic/Swift transfer.

Payout options

For UK banks sending electronic transfers, remittances are generally paid directly into the recipient's bank account. For MTOs, recipients tend to collect cash at the counter.

Speed of transfer

The speed of transfer mainly varies from instant to 24 hours for MTOs, and from two to 10 days for banks. The speed of transfer may vary for some banks, as it can depend on the procedures of the receiving bank. Please see comparative tables for full details on speed of transfer by provider. Please see comparative tables (appendix on page 36) for full details on speed of transfer by provider.

Confirming completion of transaction to remitter

Most banks and all MTOs are able to confirm the completion of a remittance. However, only a minority of survey respondents described how this confirmation takes place. MTOs often have an online service for customers to check the status of a transaction.

Provision of a UK counter service

Almost all providers offer a UK counter service, with the exception of Remit2India, who offer an online service. Weekday opening hours are generally 9am to 5pm for banks, 9.30am to 3pm or 4pm for Indian banks, and variable times for MTOs. Saturday and Sunday opening hours depend on provider and individual branch. Please see comparative tables (appendix on page 36) for details on provider opening times.

Non face-to-face methods for transferring money

Four UK banks (HBOS, Citibank, Lloyds TSB and Co-operative) offer a telephone transaction service. Two UK banks/building societies (Nationwide and Co-operative) provide an online remittance facility. The Co-operative also offers postal and fax services.

Costs

For electronic payments, the transfer fee ranges from £5 to £40 for both £100 and £500 transfers. For cash transfers the fee is between £4 and £12 to send £100, and between £4 and £21 to send £500 (see tables).

At the time of the research, the exchange rate for local currency varies between 79.5 and 84.5 Rupees to the GB£. For US\$, the rate ranges from 1.8656 to 1.9325. It is important to note that the variance in exchange rates can affect the overall cost of sending money through different providers, and consumers should always take the exchange rate into account as well as the transfer fee.

No provider indicates that a fee is charged to the recipient, although some suggest that the recipient agent or bank may apply a fee.

Guarantee of exchange rate and payout

The majority of providers guarantee the exchange rate they offer but, due to potential charges to the recipient, do not guarantee the amount that will be paid out.

Coverage in the UK and India

Providers vary considerably in their UK coverage, from three branches or outlets (State Bank of India) to around 4000 (MoneyGram). The highest concentration of outlets is in London. Other important locations are Birmingham and Glasgow.

Providers give details of networks in India, ranging from one to 9000 outlets. These include Remit2India (one outlet), MoneyGram (1205 outlets, this includes through branches of Thomas Cook India, Indusind Bank, Airwings Services PVT,

Catholic Syrian Bank, Korwett Capital Investment, Mehra Forex PVT, Supreme Securities Ltd, Surana Financial Corp, Trade Wings Ltd and UAE Exchange), Citibank (32), Bank of Baroda (over 2700), ICICI (500 branches and 2000 cash machines) and State Bank of India (9000). Please see comparative tables (appendix on page 36) for details on provider outlets.

Controls, regulations and customer service levels

Most UK banks require the customer to be an account holder to send money. This does not apply to MTOs, Indian banks or Remit2India. The main types of ID required are passport and/or driving licence. ID may be necessary for sending any amount and two types of ID (one with proof of address) should always be taken when remitting money. All UK banks are regulated by the Financial Services Authority and are

registered with the Banking Code Standards Board, and all MTOs are registered with Customs and Excise.

Complaints and redress procedures

If there are any problems with a transfer or in cases where things go wrong, customer assistance via a dedicated customer helpdesk/team, a general customer services call centre, or contact with a branch or agent may be available. If a customer registers a complaint, some providers (mainly UK banks) offer a complaints procedure. Others offer help via telephone or post (UK banks) or advise visits to a branch or agent (MTOs).

If a customer is not able to settle a problem with the financial institution, the procedure would be to approach the Financial Ombudsman.

Money transfer fee by provider for £100

Provider	Method of transfer	Transfer fee (£)	Fee as % of amount
Western Union	CT	£4	4
First Remit	CT	£5	5
ICICI Bank	ES	£5	5
Remit2India	Other	£5	5
HBOS	BD	£7	7
Barclays	IMO	£8	8
NatWest	BD	£8	8
Royal Bank of Scotland	BD	£8	8
Bank of India	BD	£8	8
Bank of India	MT	£8	8
Abbey	BD	£10	10
Bank of Baroda	BD	£10	10
Nationwide	BD	£12	12
MoneyGram	CT	£12	12
State Bank of India	BD	£12	12
Co-operative	ES	£13	13
Co-operative	BD	£13	13
HBOS	ES	£14	14
Barclays	BD	£15	15
HSBC	BD	£15	15
Bank of Baroda	MT	£15	15
NatWest	ES	£18	18
Royal Bank of Scotland	ES	£18	18
Barclays	ES	£20	20
Lloyds TSB	ES	£20	20
Nationwide	ES	£20	20
HSBC	ES	£21	21
Abbey	ES	£25	25
Citibank	ES	£30	30
Bank of Baroda	ES	£30	30
State Bank of India	ES	£32	32
Barclays	PES	£35	35
Bank of India	ES	£40	40

NB: 1) Some companies require that you send a minimum amount through their services.
2) As exchange rates offered by each provider will usually be different, please be aware that the ranking order above may change slightly.

Money transfer fee by provider for £500

Provider	Method of transfer	Transfer fee (£)	Fee as % of amount
Western Union	CT	£4	0.8
ICICI Bank	ES	£5	1
Remit2India	Other	£5	1
Barclays	IMO	£8	1.6
Bank of India	BD	£8	1.6
Bank of India	MT	£8	1.6
Abbey	BD	£10	2
Bank of Baroda	BD	£10	2
HBOS	BD	£11	2.2
Nationwide	BD	£12	2.4
State Bank of India	BD	£12	2.4
Co-operative	ES	£13	2.6
Co-operative	BD	£13	2.6
HBOS	ES	£14	2.8
Barclays	BD	£15	3
Bank of Baroda	MT	£15	3
NatWest	ES	£18	3.6
NatWest	BD	£18	3.6
Royal Bank of Scotland	ES	£18	3.6
Royal Bank of Scotland	BD	£18	3.6
Barclays	ES	£20	4
Lloyds TSB	ES	£20	4
Nationwide	ES	£20	4
HSBC	BD	£20	4
MoneyGram	CT	£20	4
HSBC	ES	£21	4.2
First Remit	CT	£21	4.2
Abbey	ES	£25	5
Citibank	ES	£30	6
Bank of Baroda	ES	£30	6
State Bank of India	ES	£32	6.4
Barclays	PES	£35	7
Bank of India	ES	£40	8

NB: 1) Some companies require that you send a minimum amount through their services.
2) As exchange rates offered by each provider will usually be different, please be aware that the ranking order above may change slightly.

Kenya

Services

Among those that participated in the survey, 15 providers offer a service to Kenya:

- UK banks/building societies: Abbey, Barclays, Citibank, HBOS, Co-operative, HSBC, Nationwide, Lloyds TSB, NatWest, Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS)
- Money transfer operators: Chequepoint, First Remit, MoneyGram, Western Union
- Country-specific channels: Bank of Baroda

Banks tend to offer electronic (telegraphic) payments via Swift or bank draft payments. Barclays offer four different payment options, including an International Money Order (IMO) service in GB£ or US\$. The money transfer operators tend to offer cash transfers.

Minimum transfer amounts and fees

Most high street banks allow remittances of any amount over £1 via electronic transfer, with no minimum fee. Minimum fees apply for Citibank (£25), Barclays (£20), Lloyds TSB (£15), and Co-operative (£13). Nationwide charges flat rates of £12 for a bank draft and £20 for an electronic transfer.

Money transfer operators (MTOs) also have a minimum transfer amount of £1, and tend to stipulate a minimum fee: MoneyGram (£12), Chequepoint (£6) and Western Union (£8). Chequepoint charge a flat rate of £5 for any bank transfer.

The Bank of Baroda stipulates a minimum fee of £15 for a mail transfer and £30 for a Swift/electronic service.

Payout options

For UK banks sending electronic transfers, remittances are generally paid directly into the recipient's bank account. For MTOs, recipients collect cash at the counter.

Speed of transfer

The speed of transfer varies from instant to 24 hours for cash transfers by MTOs, and takes from two to 10 days for electronic transfers by banks. The Bank of Baroda does not state specific speeds of transfer as this depends on the destination. The speed of transfer may vary for some banks, as it can depend on the procedures of the receiving bank. Please see comparative tables (appendix on page 36) for full details on speed of transfer by provider.

Confirming completion of transaction to remitter

Most banks and all MTOs are able to confirm the completion

of a remittance. However, only a minority of survey respondents described how this confirmation takes place. MTOs often provide an online service for customers to check the status of a transaction.

NatWest and Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) are unable to provide confirmation, and HSBC and Lloyds TSB did not respond to this question.

Provision of a UK counter service

Almost all providers offer a UK counter service. Weekday opening hours are generally 09.00 to 17.00 for banks and variable times for MTOs. Saturday and Sunday opening hours depend on provider and individual branch. Please see comparative tables (appendix on page 36) for details on provider opening times.

Non face-to-face methods for transferring money

Four UK banks (HBOS, Citibank, Lloyds TSB and Co-operative) offer a telephone transaction service. Two UK banks/building societies (Nationwide and Co-operative) provide an online remittance facility. The Co-operative also offers postal and fax services.

Transfer fees and exchange rates for £100 and £500

For electronic payments, the transfer fee ranges from £5 to £30 for both £100 and £500 transfers. For cash transfers the fee is between £3 and £14 to send £100, and between £21 and £37 to send £500. Please see comparative tables for details on transfer fees.

At the time of research, the exchange rate for local currency varies between 139.89 and 155.64 Kenyan Shillings to the GB£. For US\$, the rate ranges from 1.8656 to 1.9325. It is important to note that the variance in exchange rates can affect the overall cost of sending money through different providers, and consumers should always take the exchange rate into account as well as the transfer fee.

No provider indicates that a fee is charged to the recipient, although some suggest that the recipient agent or bank may apply a fee.

Guarantee of exchange rate and payout

The majority of providers guarantee the exchange rate they offer but, due to potential charges to the recipient, do not guarantee the amount that will be paid out.

Coverage in the UK and Kenya

Providers vary considerably in their UK coverage, from just one branch or outlet up to 4000 (MoneyGram). The highest

concentration of outlets is in London. Other important locations are Birmingham and Glasgow.

Five providers give details of distribution points in Kenya: Citibank (two), Bank of Baroda (six), Chequepoint (nine), MoneyGram (35 outlets, this includes through branches of Stanbic Bank, Cooperative Bank of Kenya and Capital Bureau de Change), and Barclays (65). Five providers (including two MTOs) disclose names of partner correspondents' organisations, but do not give details about the extent of their network. Please see comparative tables (appendix on page 36) for details on provider outlets.

Controls, regulations and customer service levels

Most UK banks require the customer to be an account holder in order to send money.

ID may be necessary for sending any amount and two types of ID (one with proof of address) should always be taken when remitting money.

All UK banks are regulated by the Financial Services Authority and are registered with the Banking Code Standards Board, and all MTOs are registered with Customs and Excise.

Complaints and redress procedures

If there are any problems with a transfer or in cases where things go wrong, customer assistance via a dedicated customer helpdesk/team, a general customer services call centre, or contact with a branch or agent may be available.

If a customer registers a complaint, some providers (mainly UK banks) offer a complaints procedure. Others offer help via telephone or post (UK banks) or advise visits to a branch or agent (MTOs).

If a customer is not able to settle a problem with the financial institution, the procedure would be to approach the Financial Ombudsman.

Money transfer fee by provider for £100

Provider	Method of transfer	Transfer fee (£)	Fee as % of amount
First Remit	CT	£5	5
Chequepoint	BD	£5	5
Chequepoint	CT	£6	6
HBOS	BD	£7	7
Barclays	IMO	£8	8
NatWest	BD	£8	8
Royal Bank of Scotland	BD	£8	8
Bank of Baroda	BD	£10	10
Nationwide	BD	£12	12
MoneyGram	CT	£12	12
Co-operative	ES	£13	13
Co-operative	BD	£13	13
Western Union	CT	£14	14
HBOS	ES	£14	14
Barclays	BD	£15	15
HSBC	BD	£15	15
Bank of Baroda	MT	£15	15
NatWest	ES	£18	18
Royal Bank of Scotland	ES	£18	18
Barclays	ES	£20	20
Nationwide	ES	£20	20
Lloyds TSB	ES	£20	20
HSBC	ES	£21	21
Abbey	ES	£25	25
Citibank	ES	£30	30
Bank of Baroda	ES	£30	30
Barclays	PES	£35	35

NB: 1) Some companies require that you send a minimum amount through their services.
2) As exchange rates offered by each provider will usually be different, please be aware that the ranking order above may change slightly.

Money transfer fee by provider for £500

Provider	Method of transfer	Transfer fee (£)	Fee as % of amount
Chequepoint	BD	£5	1
Barclays	IMO	£8	1.6
Bank of Baroda	BD	£10	2
HBOS	ES	£11	2.2
Nationwide	BD	£12	2.4
Co-operative	ES	£13	2.6
Co-operative	BD	£13	2.6
HBOS	ES	£14	2.8
Barclays	BD	£15	3
Bank of Baroda	MT	£15	3
NatWest	ES	£18	3.6
NatWest	BD	£18	3.6
Royal Bank of Scotland	ES	£18	3.6
Royal Bank of Scotland	BD	£18	3.6
Barclays	ES	£20	4
Nationwide	ES	£20	4
HSBC	BD	£20	4
Lloyds TSB	ES	£20	4
HSBC	ES	£21	4.2
First Remit	CT	£21	4.2
Chequepoint	CT	£21	4.2
Abbey	ES	£25	5
Citibank	ES	£30	6
Bank of Baroda	ES	£30	6
Barclays	PES	£35	7
MoneyGram	CT	£36	7.2
Western Union	CT	£37	7.4

NB: 1) Some companies require that you send a minimum amount through their services.
2) As exchange rates offered by each provider will usually be different, please be aware that the ranking order above may change slightly.

Nigeria

Services

Among those that participated in the survey, 15 providers offer a service to Nigeria:

- UK banks/building societies: Abbey, Barclays, Citibank, HBOS, Co-operative, HSBC, Nationwide, Lloyds TSB, NatWest, Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS)
- Money transfer operators: Chequepoint, First Remit, MoneyGram, Travelex Money Transfer, Western Union
- Country-specific channels: There were no responses from Nigerian country-specific channels invited to participate in this survey.

Banks tend to offer electronic (telegraphic) payments via Swift or bank draft payments. Barclays offer four different payment options, including an International Money Order (IMO) service in GB£ or US\$. The money transfer operators tend to offer cash transfers.

Minimum transfer amounts and fees

Most high street banks allow remittances of any amount over £1 via electronic transfer, with no minimum fee. Minimum fees apply for Citibank (£25), Barclays (£20), Lloyds TSB (£15), and Co-operative (£13). Nationwide charges flat rates of £12 for a bank draft and £20 for an Electronic transfer.

Money transfer operators (MTOs) also have a minimum transfer amount of £1, and tend to stipulate a minimum fee: MoneyGram (£7), Travelex Money Transfer (£7.50 or £7.13 with a loyalty card), Chequepoint (£5) and Western Union (£8). Chequepoint charge a flat rate of £5 for any bank transfer.

Payout options

For UK banks sending electronic transfers, remittances are generally paid directly into the recipient's bank account. For MTOs, recipients collect cash at the counter.

Speed of transfer

The speed of transfer varies from instant to 24 hours for cash transfers by MTOs, and takes from two to 10 days for electronic transfers by banks. The speed of transfer may vary for some banks, as it can depend on the procedures of the receiving bank. Please see the comparative tables in the appendix for full details on speed of transfer by provider.

Confirming completion of transaction to remitter

Most banks and all MTOs are able to confirm the completion of a remittance. However, only a minority of survey respondents described how this confirmation takes place. MTOs often provide an online service for customers to check the status of a transaction.

NatWest and Royal Bank of Scotland are unable to provide confirmation, and HSBC and Lloyds TSB did not respond to this question.

Provision of a UK counter service

Almost all providers offer a UK counter service. Weekday opening hours are generally 09.00 to 17.00 for banks and variable times for MTOs. Saturday and Sunday opening hours depend on provider and individual branch. Please see comparative tables (appendix on page 36) for details on provider opening times.

Non face-to-face methods for transferring money

Four UK banks (HBOS, Citibank, Lloyds TSB and Co-operative) offer a telephone transaction service. Two UK banks/building societies (Nationwide and Co-operative) provide an online remittance facility. The Co-operative also offers postal and fax services.

Transfer fees and exchange rates for £100 and £500

For electronic payments, the transfer fee ranges from £5 to £30 for both £100 and £500 transfers. For cash transfers the fee is between £5 and £12 to send £100, and between £21 and £32 to send £500. Please see tables opposite page.

At the time of research, the exchange rate for local currency varies between 238.39 and 254.84 Nigerian Naira to the GB£. For US\$, the rate ranges from 1.8656 to 1.9325. It is important to note that the variance in exchange rates can affect the overall cost of sending money through different providers, and consumers should always take the exchange rate into account as well as the transfer fee.

No provider indicates that a fee is charged to the recipient, although some suggest that the recipient agent or bank may apply a fee.

Guarantee of exchange rate and payout

The majority of providers guarantee the exchange rate they offer but, due to potential charges to the recipient, do not guarantee the amount that will be paid out. Travelex Money Transfer can guarantee the amount paid out in Naira.

Coverage in the UK and Nigeria

Providers vary considerably in their UK coverage, from just one branch or outlet up to 4000 (MoneyGram). The highest concentration of outlets is in London. Other important locations are Birmingham and Glasgow.

Four providers disclosed details of distribution points in Nigeria: Travelex Money Transfer (228), Chequepoint (129), MoneyGram (215 outlets, this includes through branches of

Global Bank plc, Equitorial Trust Bank, Broad Bank and United Bank for Africa), and Citibank (seven). About half of the providers, including three MTOs, disclosed names of partner correspondent organisations. For example, Travelex Money Transfer has partnerships with Union Bank of Nigeria (128 outlets) and Afribank (100 outlets). About half of the providers give names of partner correspondent organisations, but do not disclose details of distribution points.

Please see comparative tables (appendix on page 36) for details on provider outlets.

Controls, regulations and customer service levels

Most UK banks require the customer to be an account holder in order to send money. This generally does not apply to MTOs although Travelex Money Transfer do offer an option for loyalty card users.

ID may be necessary for sending any amount and two types of ID (one with proof of address) should always be taken when remitting money.

All UK banks are regulated by the Financial Services Authority and are registered with the Banking Code Standards Board, and all MTOs are registered with Customs and Excise.

Complaints and redress procedures

If there are any problems with a transfer or in cases where things go wrong, customer assistance via a dedicated customer helpdesk/team, a general customer services call centre, or contact with a branch or agent may be available.

If a customer registers a complaint, some providers (mainly UK banks) offer a complaints procedure. Others offer help via telephone or post (UK banks) or advise visits to a branch or agent (MTOs).

If a customer is not able to settle a problem with the financial institution, the procedure would be to approach the Financial Ombudsman.

Money transfer fee by provider for £100

Provider	Method of transfer	Transfer fee (£)	Fee as % of amount
First Remit	CT	£5	5
Chequepoint	CT	£5	5
Chequepoint	BD	£5	5
HBOS	BD	£7	7
MoneyGram	CT	£7	7
Travelex Money Transfer	LC	£7.13	7.13
Travelex Money Transfer	CT	£7.5	7.5
Barclays	IMO	£8	8
NatWest	BD	£8	8
Royal Bank of Scotland	BD	£8	8
Nationwide	BD	£12	12
Western Union	CT	£12	12
Co-operative	ES	£13	13
Co-operative	BD	£13	13
HBOS	ES	£14	14
Barclays	BD	£15	15
HSBC	BD	£15	15
NatWest	ES	£18	18
Royal Bank of Scotland	ES	£18	18
Barclays	ES	£20	20
Nationwide	ES	£20	20
Lloyds TSB	ES	£20	20
HSBC	ES	£21	21
Abbey	ES	£25	25
Citibank	ES	£30	30
Barclays	PES	£35	35

NB: 1) Some companies require that you send a minimum amount through their services.
2) As exchange rates offered by each provider will usually be different, please be aware that the ranking order above may change slightly.

Money transfer fee by provider for £500

Provider	Method of transfer	Transfer fee (£)	Fee as % of amount
Chequepoint	BD	£5	1
Barclays	IMO	£8	1.6
HBOS	BD	£11	2.2
Nationwide	BD	£12	2.4
Co-operative	ES	£13	2.6
Co-operative	BD	£13	2.6
HBOS	ES	£14	2.8
Barclays	BD	£15	3
NatWest	ES	£18	3.6
NatWest	ES	£18	3.6
Royal Bank of Scotland	BD	£18	3.6
Royal Bank of Scotland	ES	£18	3.6
Barclays	ES	£20	4
Nationwide	ES	£20	4
HSBC	BD	£20	4
First Remit	CT	£21	4.2
Travelex Money Transfer	LC	£23	4.6
Travelex Money Transfer	CT	£24	4.8
Abbey	ES	£25	5
MoneyGram	CT	£25	5
Chequepoint	CT	£25	5
Citibank	ES	£30	6
Western Union	CT	£32	6.4
Barclays	ES	£35	7

NB: 1) Some companies require that you send a minimum amount through their services.
2) As exchange rates offered by each provider will usually be different, please be aware that the ranking order above may change slightly.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Speed of transfer

Speed of transfer through country-specific banks

Method of transfer	Speed of transfer
Electronic	
Bank of Baroda	Variable (depends on local clearing)
Bank of India	Variable (depends on local clearing)
Bank of China	Not stated
Remit2India	Variable (depends on local clearing)
Sonali Bank UK	1 to 4 days
State Bank of India	Variable (depends on local clearing)
Cash transfer	
ICICI Bank	Up to 2 days (instant for account holders)

Note: These times may vary depending on the type of transfer chosen with each provider. See from page 11 for mystery shopping results of actual speeds of transfer.

Speed of transfer through UK banks and building societies

Electronic transfer provider	Speed of transfer
Abbey	Up to 5 days
Barclays	Up to 8 days
Citibank	Up to 5 days
Co-operative	Up to 5 days
HBOS	3-5 days, depends on recipient bank
HSBC	Depends on local clearing/practice
Lloyds TSB	Up to 3 days
Nationwide	Depends on local clearing/practice
NatWest	Up to 5 days
RBS	Up to 5 days

Note: These times may vary depending on the type of transfer chosen with each provider, and agent/branch location in recipient country

Speed of transfer through money transfer operators

Cash transfer provider	Speed of transfer
Chequepoint*	Up to 24 hours
First Remit	Up to 24 hours
MoneyGram	10 minutes/instant
Travelex Money Transfer	10 minutes/instant
Western Union	10 minutes/instant

* If sent by 12 noon UK time, Chequepoint cash and bank transfers arrive the same day.

Appendix 2 - Provider branches and outlets in the UK

Number of country-specific bank branches/outlets in the UK

Provider	Number of branches / outlets in the UK
First Remit	250
Express Funds	37
ICICI Bank	34 (majority of outlets through Lloyds TSB)
Bank of Baroda	7
Bank of India	6
Bank of China	5
Samba International	5
State Bank of India	3
Ghana International bank	1
Remit2India	0

Number of money transfer operator branches/outlets in the UK

Provider	Number of branches/outlets in the UK
MoneyGram	4000
Western Union	2688
Chequepoint	700
First Remit	250
Travelex Money Transfer	125

Number of UK bank and building society branches

Bank	Number of UK branches
Lloyds TSB	2200
Barclays	2000
NatWest	1630
HSBC	1500
HBOS	1364
Nationwide	872
Abbey	741
RBS	642
Co-operative	100
Citibank	4

Appendix 3 - Provider opening hours

Counter service opening hours for country-specific banks in the UK

Provider	Weekdays	Weekends
Bank of Baroda	09.30-15.00/16.00	Closed all weekend
Bank of China	09.30-16.00	Sunday only: 12.00-16.00
Bank of India	09.30-15.00/16.00	Closed all weekend
Express Funds	09.00-19.00/08.30-19.30	Sat: 09.00-19.00/08.30-19.30 Sun: 10.00-16.00/10.00-18.00
First Remit	10.00-21.00/10.00-18.00	10.00-18.00
Ghana International Bank	09.30-15.00/16.00	Closed all weekend
ICICI Bank	09.30-16.30/17.00	Closed all weekend
Samba International	–	–
Sonali Bank UK	09.30-15.00/16.00	Saturday 11.00-14.00
State Bank of India	09.30-15.00/16.00	Closed all weekend
Remit2India	Not stated	Not stated

All times may vary according to branch/location

Counter service opening hours for UK banks and building societies

Provider	Weekdays	Weekends
Abbey	09.00-17.00	09.00-17.00
Barclays	Depends on branch	Depends on branch
Co-operative	09.30-16.30/17.00	Saturday only: 09.30-13.00
Citibank	09.00-17.00	Closed all weekend
HBOS	09.00-17.00	Saturday: 09.00-13.00, limited Sunday*
HSBC	09.00-16.30	Saturday only
Lloyds TSB	09.00-17.00	Saturday only: 09.00-13.00
Nationwide	09.00-17.00	Saturday only: 09.00-15.00
NatWest	09.00-17.00	Saturday only: 09.00-13.00
Royal Bank of Scotland	09.00-17.00	Saturday only: 09.00-13.00

All times may vary according to branch/location * Limited Sunday service at selected outlets

Counter service opening hours for money transfer operators

Provider	Weekdays	Weekends
Chequepoint*	09.00-18.00	09.00-18.00
First Remit	10.00-21.00/10.00-18.00	10.00-18.00
MoneyGram	08.00-20.00	Sat: 09.00-18.00; Sun: 10.00-16.00
Travelex Money Transfer	09.00-19.00/08.30-19.30	Sat: As weekdays, Sun: 10.00-18.00
Western Union	09.00-17.30	Saturday: 09.00-17.30

All times may vary according to branch/location * some Chequepoint outlets are open 24/7

Appendix 5 – Reasons for and patterns in migration and remittance sending

From NOP World

The background to a respondent's arrival in the UK and migratory aspirations are strongly linked to remittance behaviour. Strong emotional and financial ties to the country of origin exist, as well as a considerable reliance by new arrivals on their own community in the UK.

Culturally based social interdependence

The background to migration and arrival in the UK varies among focus group participants, from those who arrived two months before the research to those who have been living in the UK for upwards of 30 years. Interdependence among community groups for financial support, domestic help, information and advice, employment, and business opportunity remains as important a feature of life in the UK as it does at home.

Aspirations of migration

Across the country groups, migration took place with the primary purpose of gaining financial security. Security remains a watchword across these groups, even for those who have been in the UK for a number of years. This is signified not only by wealth and financial attainment, but also a steady income. This is made possible by secure employment, assets such as property and businesses, and education. Education is valued across all groups, as it represents the means by which to gain secure employment.

These aspirations underlie migration across the groups, although a number of factors contribute to specific goals and to the dynamics of remittance behaviour.

Attitudes to financial and educational issues

There is a wide variation across the sample in terms of level of financial attainment. Many have been settled in the UK for a number of years, and have established businesses and professions. This group see themselves as having gained financial security, which may have been a core objective of their migration. Others are working in lower paid jobs, or are studying. Those who are studying or have recently arrived in the UK may be living with relatives or fellow church members. Attitudes to financial issues tend to be characterised by the 'migrant mindset', described above, where building security and stability are key.

'You must have some money for a rainy day.' Indian

Particularly among those from India, there is a highly collectivist attitude to financial building, where the family and even the wider community should benefit from an individual's success, with less emphasis on individual gain.

Indians tended to have achieved their educational ambitions, either by themselves or through their children. The fulfilment

of this ambition means that they tend to be focused on building their wealth and on giving to their families and to others.

Nigerians and Ghanaians see themselves as particularly enterprising and ambitious in terms of business and educational attainments.

There is also a sense of sharing the burden. As one Chinese respondent explained, having four other brothers living outside China means that the responsibility of sending money home is shared equally.

Education is a focus for Nigerians, Ghanaian and Kenyan students, and financial ambitions are secondary.

'I'm working part-time, but if I get a scholarship to pay for my school fees then in some way I'm financially secure.' Ghanaian

'I think that now we are becoming more like the West Africans, where there is a culture of education.' Kenyan

In addition, the economic situations in Ghana and in Nigeria mean that there is a strong sense of responsibility placed on those who travel to other countries. Even for students, there is a sense that they should contribute financially to their families in Ghana.

'I remember the first time I had a job and I told them I had a job. That was a mistake I made! In Ghana, when you're in higher education they don't expect anything from you. Here, even though you're in education, they expect you to do something for them.' Ghanaian

Family ties

Most have close family residing in their homeland. These connections prompt the majority of contact, such as emails and phone calls, and make for a strong emotional bond with the homeland. Those living in the UK have often been 'sent' from their home in order to access education, prosperity, and ultimately security for the collective good of the family or community as a whole. In addition, economic disparity between those living in the homeland and those in the UK results in a strong sense of responsibility to those left behind.

Cultural heritage

Elements connecting respondents to cultural heritage are family values, religious observances and the quest for financial security. These factors are seen to be robust to the different lifestyle in the UK, with all expressing a strong sense of loyalty to their homeland.

'In Indian culture, your mother and father will stick by you, even if you've done something wrong.' Indian

Church and temple networks form a strong bond within the

communities in the UK. When they arrive in the UK, Ghanaians are likely to seek out members of their own church at home in Ghana. Temples are often a hub for social activity among Indians.

The first generation tends to be anxious that their cultural traditions should not be diluted, and this can be a source of tension between the generations, particularly in the Indian community.

***'Even if children are born here, they should have links with Nigeria.'* Nigerian**

There is a strong sense of affiliation with the land among Bangladeshis. They feel that regular trips to the homeland will foster stronger ties between those born in the UK and their parents' country of birth. Indeed some examples were given of second generation Bangladeshis visiting the country to work in non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

Generational differences

These were voiced by the Indian group, where primary migration had taken place in the 1960s and 1970s. Younger people were more likely to have been born in the UK.

For Indian people, younger first and second-generation remittance service users retain many aspects of their cultural identity. Religious observances, emphasis on extended family networking and an emotional connection to their heritage mean that younger people across the groups feel a strong connection to their homeland. This connection, however, is not as strong as that of their parents who have close family, including parents and siblings, in India.

This sometimes means that tensions arise between older, first generation Indians, and younger people, who can be more individualistic in their outlook. Younger, second generation remittance service users are more likely to see the UK as their home, and to feel less responsibility and emotional connection to their Indian roots. This tension could also be observed among the Nigerian groups.

'Parents have a responsibility to tell children about their country. We are sending money home now, but will our children?' Bangladeshis

Length of time in the UK

Those who have recently arrived in the UK rely heavily on social support from their own cultural community living in the UK. This community may include members of the recently arrived person's close or extended family, church group, geographical group or other community network. Those who have most recently arrived in the UK are likely to rely heavily on others to help them establish the basics of livelihood in the UK, including providing somewhere to live, assistance in finding employment, financial support, and as a conduit in interaction with institutions.

Appendix 6 - DFID and remittances

DFID's priorities are to improve access, transparency and choice for remittance senders and recipients, with lower costs and greater security. Remittances have a significant impact for people with low incomes; helping to improve livelihoods and increase opportunities. DFID also sees remittances as a key means of reducing financial exclusion.

Other DFID remittance activities include:

1. Remittance Country Partnerships: with Nigeria, Bangladesh and Ghana. These partnerships will include a range of measures to remove impediments to remittance flows, improve access (and the terms of that access) for poor and rural people to remittances and other financial services and strengthen the capacity of the financial sector to provide efficient and widespread transfer payment services.
2. Remittances Task Force: the Inter-Agency Remittances Task Force emerged from a remittances conference in London in October 2003. DFID has worked with the World Bank to help the Task Force develop and take forward its agenda on data collection and coordination and the development of core principles.
3. Better Data and Increased Transparency: DFID has commissioned a remittance household survey in the UK, and will also initiate surveys in a number of developing countries.
4. Influencing the private sector: the private sector holds the key to improved access and lower costs. In a meeting titled 'Remittances as a Market Opportunity' in June 2004, the Secretary of State for International Development, Hilary Benn, initiated a high level dialogue with banks, money transfer companies and other stakeholders on ways to reduce costs and improve access to low-income senders and recipients. This has led to the formation of a Remittances Working Group with the private sector, with sub-groups focused on regulation, product development, and information sharing.

Appendices continued

Appendix 7 - Amount over which identification is required

Amount over which identification is required

Provider	Amount over which ID is required
MoneyGram	£500
First Remit	£500
Travelex Money Transfer	£600
Western Union	£600
Samba International	£1000
NatWest	£1000
Royal Bank of Scotland	£1000
Chequepoint	£1900
Ghana International Bank	£2000
Express Funds	£2000
Bank of Baroda	£2000