

SAVE

XMAS

A quick guide to paying for Christmas

OFFICE OF FAIR TRADING



**Many people lost money when Farepak collapsed.**

**If you're one of those people who want to put a bit away each week so that you'll have enough to get what you need at Christmas there are quite a few options.**

You might want to stop yourself getting at your money before Christmas. You might prefer vouchers to cash. And perhaps you want the money collected from your home.

**Use this leaflet to decide what will work for you.**

The table below lets you compare some of the different options.

To find out how to start using one of these ways to pay for Christmas, there's more information on the back of the leaflet or you can call Consumer Direct on **08454 04 05 06**.

	Is there any protection if the scheme goes bust?	Do I get interest on my money?	Will I get a bonus?	Is it difficult to take money out before Christmas?	Will they collect the money from my home?	Can it pay out in vouchers?	Does it pay out just before Christmas?	Do I have to buy from a particular shop or supplier?
<b>Standard bank and building society savings account</b>	Yes*	Yes	Sometimes	With some accounts you have to give notice to take your money out or you lose interest	No	No	It's up to you when you take your money out	No
<b>Special building society Christmas account</b>	Yes*	Yes	Yes	May lose the bonus and have to close the account	No	No	Most do	No
<b>Credit union savings account</b>	Yes†	You may get a dividend	Sometimes	No	No	No	It's up to you when you take your money out	No
<b>Special credit union Christmas savings account</b>	Yes†	You may get a dividend	Sometimes	May lose the dividend or bonus and have to close the account	No	Some have voucher schemes	Yes	No
<b>Post Office® Christmas Club (with the Bank of Ireland)</b>	If the Bank of Ireland goes bust, you're unlikely to get all your money back	No	Savers will receive a booklet of special offers for use at selected retail partners	Yes	No	You can choose 'One4all' gift vouchers or an e-card (like a pre-paid credit card)	Yes	There is a list of retail partners signed up to accept the card as a method of payment or 'One4all' gift vouchers which can be spent in many high street shops
<b>Christmas hamper and voucher schemes</b>	Companies belonging to the Christmas Prepayments Association have arrangements in place to protect your money. Ask about the level of protection before you use them.	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Vouchers can usually be spent with selected retail partners
<b>Supermarkets, national retailer schemes and shopping malls</b>	If the company goes bust you're unlikely to get all your money back	No	Yes	Usually	No	Sometimes	Yes	Yes
<b>Christmas clubs with local shops (like butchers, corner shops and toy shops)</b>	If the shop closes or goes bust you're unlikely to get all your money back	No	Sometimes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
<b>Hamper scheme from your milkman</b>	If the company goes bust you're unlikely to get all your money back	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

\* If the bank or building society goes bust, you may be able to get compensation from the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) up to a maximum of £50,000. There are a number of conditions and exclusions that apply to any compensation you might receive from the FSCS. For details see the FSCS website [www.fscs.org.uk](http://www.fscs.org.uk)

† If the credit union goes bust, you may be able to get compensation from the Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) up to a maximum of £50,000 (in England, Scotland and Wales). There are a number of conditions and exclusions that apply to any compensation you might receive from the FSCS. For details see the FSCS website [www.fscs.org.uk](http://www.fscs.org.uk)

Note that the Post Office Christmas Club is not protected by the Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

For credit unions in Northern Ireland, contact the Companies Registry at [www.detini.gov.uk](http://www.detini.gov.uk)

This leaflet gives the best available information at the time of going to press. It presents what is generally true for these saving options, but exceptions may exist.

## Further information

Consumer Direct is a telephone and online consumer advice service funded by government and managed by the Office of Fair Trading. It operates in partnership with Local Authority Trading Standards Services to offer consumers clear, practical and impartial advice and information.



To find out about credit unions, contact the Association of British Credit Unions (ABCUL) on 0161 832 3694 or at [www.abc.ul.org](http://www.abc.ul.org), or contact the Scottish League of Credit Unions on 0141 774 5020 or at [www.scottishcu.org](http://www.scottishcu.org)

To compare the different bank and building society savings accounts available go to the Financial Services Authority website [www.moneymadeclear.fsa.gov.uk](http://www.moneymadeclear.fsa.gov.uk)

Citizens Advice may also be able to help you work out the best way of paying for Christmas – check the phone directory to find your nearest branch.

Local Authority Trading Standards Services may also be able to help – check the phone directory for your nearest trading standards office or visit [www.tradingstandards.gov.uk](http://www.tradingstandards.gov.uk)

To find out about compensation limits for banks, building societies in the UK and credit unions in England, Scotland or Wales contact the Financial Services Compensation Scheme on 020 7892 7300. For credit unions in Northern Ireland contact the Companies Registry on 0845 604 8888. Companies Registry is part of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment.

Call **0800 389 3158** for more free copies of this leaflet or to request a different format.