



# Cash Savings Switching Box

Consumer testing to inform the FCA's proposed switching box

## RESEARCH REPORT

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The Financial Conduct Authority

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## 1 Executive Summary

In January 2015 the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) published the final findings of its Cash Savings Market Study and proposed remedies. In December 2015 a number of remedies were confirmed (to take effect from December 2016) while a number of other potential remedies were to be developed following a number of randomised controlled trials (RCTs). Following these RCTs, a need for additional consumer research was identified to further explore reactions to the proposed switching box remedy in order to help understand some of the findings from the RCTs and further refine the switching box.

Optimisa was appointed to conduct a qualitative study consisting of 6 consumer focus groups. The focus groups, all conducted with consumers holding savings accounts, took place in London, Leeds and Glasgow in February 2016.

Four variants of a potential switching box message were tested - two used in the RCTs (variants 1 and 1a) and two new. A mix of longer and shorter formats were used, either included with an account annual statement or a rate reduction letter. Three of the variants included an indication of competitor rates available in the market; all showed an alternative higher rate available with a customer's existing provider. The table below summarises the detail of the four variants:

Variant	Format	Communication Type	Provider's best-paying product	Average of best-paying products from competitors	Interest in % terms	Cash Illustration	Increment per £1,000
V1	LONG	STATEMENT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
V1a	LONG	STATEMENT	✓		✓	✓	✓
V2	SHORT	STATEMENT	✓	✓	✓		
V3	SHORT	RATE REDUCTION	✓	✓		✓	✓

Full details of the sample profiles and the variants tested are provided in Section 10, the Appendix to the report.

## 1.1 Key findings

While the focus of the research was on reactions to the switching box variants, these need to be considered alongside a number of contextual factors relating to how consumers interact with communications from their providers.

Firstly, consumers are not (currently) expecting to receive a switching box message. At the same time, there is a perception that providers are very regularly targeting customers with communications about new and/or complementary products; as a result people have become conditioned by the market to expect to be sold to. Against this backdrop, on receipt of a letter or statement containing a switching box, this research tells us that two things can happen:

1. A fairly swift assumption is made by some that the communication is:
  - trying to either upsell to a new savings product or encourage the customer to leave the bank
2. Messages about better rates being available elsewhere cause confusion and some suspicion:
  - it is counter intuitive to commercial practice; why would any provider point its customers towards a competitor?

Once the rationale for the switching box was explained, it was understood and well received. Savers felt it was a good idea that might make them stop and think, or consider switching. Comparisons were made to similar initiatives in the energy sector, and a tone of 'friendly advice' enhances the extent to which the message is positively viewed.

*"It's happening now with energy already. Energy isn't going to tell you, 'Go to British Gas, or go to NPower because they've got a better rate', they're not going to tell you that, they're going to say, 'We've got the best rate, come to us'. There are other energy suppliers out there but they're not going to do that."*

Low confidence / Medium savings, Older, Leeds

*"The law's changing now; they've got to do it by law"*

Low confidence / Medium savings, Older, Leeds

*"I thought that was because they had to now as well, because didn't they change the law on that?"*

Low confidence / Low savings, Older, London

*"Some of the energy companies do that, EDF Energy, that I've got, tells you, they'll send me an email and say, 'By the way, there's a competitor doing a better deal'"*

Low confidence / Low savings, Older, London

*"I think it should sound like they're giving friendly advice, 'Is this still working for you? There are better things.'"*

Low confidence / Medium savings, Younger, Glasgow

*"I think it's a brilliant idea but I would definitely always explain where it's come from; that's a big thing."*

High confidence / High savings, Younger, London

In order to combat the initial uncertainty around the purpose of the box and make sure that the intended message cuts through, this research suggests that setting the context for the message and explaining the rationale – including making it clear it is a legal or regulatory requirement – behind it will be crucial.

There are also two other contextual factors that need to be borne in mind when developing switching box messaging. The first of these is that consumers expect providers to put them onto the highest rate available; being informed that there is a higher rate for an equivalent account within the organisation can create a less than positive response [towards their provider]. Equally, the idea of switching away is perceived as a 'hassle'; consumers need a compelling reason to move.

*"That concept of switching is terrifying"*

High confidence / High savings, Younger, London

*"It's too much trouble, opening an account, closing an account, going to another bank, then you've got to get used to the ways of that bank, just to save a little bit of money"*

Low confidence / Low savings, Older, London

As well as taking into consideration the contextual backdrop, the message needs to fulfil four criteria in order to achieve its aims;

1. It needs to be low **EFFORT**: easy to read
2. It needs to perform highly on **CLARITY**: clear and unambiguous
3. It needs to demonstrate **FOCUS**: succinct and to the point
4. It needs to provide **DIRECTION**: a strong call to action and clear signposting to next steps

The variants tested all used a simple colourful graphic to illustrate the different levels of interest that could be earned by switching; this was very well received. The research participants felt the graph made it very easy to visualise the benefit of moving to a higher rate without needing to think about it too much. There was also agreement that the switching box should include both interest rates and cash illustrations.

The type of communication used to convey the switching box also appears to influence the impact of the message. With statements, while this was the communication most people said they would open, the majority claimed that if they read their statements at all, they

would normally go straight to the 'bottom line'; the key focus was to find out their balance. The switching box therefore made more sense when the balance was included in it, but there remains a risk that some customers will focus on finding out their balance and disregard all of the other information.

The rate reduction letter in contrast gave the switching box more relevance, largely due to the logical sequence of the information contained in the letter.

The research also looked at the potential for a standalone letter containing the switching box. While this was perceived to have some benefits, on balance there was a sense that as an unexpected communication it would probably be discarded as a 'sales' message. For participants who claimed only to read their statement, there was a sense that they preferred the idea of a standalone switching box message to avoid distracting from their statement.

Overall the variant that was felt to have most impact was variant 3; the short, cash-illustrative format. Although the context of the switching box (i.e. rate reduction letter) clearly had an impact and engaged attention, the variant also performed best because of its strong simple narrative and natural, logical flow of information. It also felt more personal and had clear signposting to the next steps.

## 2 Background

### 2.1 Context

The 'Switching Box' is one of the proposed cash savings disclosure remedies proposed by the FCA's 2015 Cash Savings Market Study. It aims to provide cash savers with information about interest rates on their existing account and other comparable accounts available to them to encourage them to consider their choice of savings account and provider.

In collaboration with two firms, the FCA had run RCTs that directly tested different versions and positions of the switching box in real communications to customers. Based on the findings from the RCTs, four switching box variants were developed for testing. Optimisa Research was subsequently commissioned to conduct qualitative research to capture initial reactions to these and to identify the variant (or elements of the switching box) that was the clearest and easiest to understand. Across the variants, different formats were used, such as percentages versus cash illustrations, and showing alternative rates available from the same provider versus competitor rates available elsewhere.

### 2.2 Objectives

The project had two core objectives:

1. To gain insight into consumers' initial reactions to the switching box in order to understand some of the findings of the RCTs
2. To identify the elements of the switching box that consumers found to be most useful and therefore identify a variant of the switching box that is the easiest and clearest to understand, including:
  - testing comprehension of the wording included in the different variants to understand what's clear, what's not clear and how the language can be improved
  - evaluating the impact of visual aspects i.e. design, layout, symbols vs. text etc., and understanding which are likely to work best and which (if any) could have an adverse effect

This report documents the findings of this latest research, which will be used to help refine the switching box proposals.

### 3 Methodology

We conducted qualitative research in February 2016 covering three locations in the UK: London, Leeds and Glasgow.

Six focus group discussions were conducted with consumers, each lasting 90 minutes. 42 consumers in total participated. Across the sample all held cash savings accounts, including a good proportion of easy access accounts; with a mix of regular and ad-hoc savers.

Participants were selected to represent a range of attributes:

- Financial confidence – Higher and Lower\*
- Savings account providers – a range of banks and building societies
- Account – a mix of types of savings accounts - easy access, cash ISAs, fixed term accounts
- Channel – a mix of online, telephone and in branch for purchase and management
- Savings held – High (£15k+), Medium (£5k-£14,999) and Low (£100-£4,999) total savings
- Age and SEG – Younger (21-44) and Older (45-70) groups, a mix of B/C1/C2
- A mix of males and females

\*Financial confidence was derived from a series of attitudinal statements provided by the FCA and self-selected by prospective participants at the recruitment stage.

Each group included two non-native English speakers to ensure that consumers that didn't have English as their first language were also represented in the sample.

We wanted participants to read the materials as naturally as possible without too much preamble or prior discussion of the contents. Capturing spontaneous, uninfluenced views was important, so participants were encouraged to note down their own reactions in self-complete taskbooks before discussing them as a group.

After the initial introductions, each participant was handed a sealed envelope which they were asked to open and read the contents (one of four switching box variants) as though it had arrived in the post from their savings provider. Once read, participants recorded their personal reactions before discussing the variant as a group.

Four variants were tested. The table overleaf summarises the main differences between the four variants:

Variant	Format	Communication Type	Provider's best-paying product	Average of best-paying products from competitors	Interest in % terms	Cash Illustration	Increment per £1,000
V1	LONG	STATEMENT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
V1a	LONG	STATEMENT	✓		✓	✓	✓
V2	SHORT	STATEMENT	✓	✓	✓		
V3	SHORT	RATE REDUCTION	✓	✓		✓	✓

To minimise order bias, the variants first seen were rotated across the groups; each group started with either the two long versions or the two short versions.

Once initial reactions were captured, the discussion looked at the different elements of the variants in detail, covering questions on content, language, layout, level of information and any areas for improvement. Participants were also asked to rank the four variants in terms of which variant or elements of variants was felt to be easiest to understand and most impactful in terms of encouraging action. These were then re-examined, allowing us to identify a set of guidelines to inform the development of the switching box going forwards.

Full details of the sample structure, recruitment criteria and materials tested can be found in Section 10, the appendix to the report.

## 4 Key Findings

While the focus of the research remained on reactions to the materials being tested rather than explicitly exploring behaviours and attitudes to savings more generally, the participants' initial reactions to the variants unearthed some very useful contextual factors that need to be considered when designing a switching box. Many of the participants felt that if there was a better rate available from their provider for an equivalent account they should be put onto it, and there was also a perception that switching to another provider would be a hassle.

#### 4.1 Messages about switching savings are unexpected

The purpose of the switching box is not immediately apparent to all who read it. Consumers have been 'conditioned' to expect their financial services provider to sell, or upsell to them. This market conditioning leads some to quickly assume that the box is a marketing communication highlighting new accounts the provider is trying to promote.

*"I think they're just trying to sell you the Every Day Saver product"*

High confidence / High savings, Older, Glasgow

*"It's very honest, I admire their honesty but I think it's strange ...you'd want to know who's gaining from you switching"*

High confidence / High savings, Younger, London

The inclusion in the box of information about rates available elsewhere is also unexpected; this causes confusion and in some cases concern or suspicion. It feels odd and can be interpreted by some as an attempt to push the customer away. In both cases, i.e. whether the box is seen as a marketing communication to sell a new savings account or an attempt to encourage the customer to leave, there is a risk that the communication will be discarded before a more detailed reading can take place.

#### 4.2 Setting the context and explaining the rationale for the box is key to engagement

The second factor driving responses to the message about better rates being available elsewhere is a feeling of perplexity observed across the focus groups. For many, the idea that a provider would willingly direct customers towards better deals with competitors makes no sense from a commercial perspective and is not something anyone would expect. As a result, participants assume one of two things; either their provider did not value their custom and wanted them to leave, or they were being forced to provide information about competitor offers. Once consumers understood why their provider would send them the switching box, they were more trusting of the message and as a result more inclined to engage with the communication. Across the groups there was agreement that both the

rationale for the switching box (i.e. a legal/regulatory requirement) and the involvement of the FCA need to be made clear.

### 4.3 Four characteristics needed in order to maximise engagement

In order to engage as many consumers as possible as fully as possible, the switching box and the information contained within it need to meet four key criteria:

1. **EFFORT** – low effort to read
2. **CLARITY** – clear and unambiguous
3. **FOCUS** – succinct and to the point
4. **DIRECTION** – a strong call to action and clear signposting to next steps

#### 4.3.1 These criteria create a useful framework for designing and evaluating switching box communications

The need for the switching box message to require minimum effort was clear in all of the groups. In this context **'low effort'** means easy to read and digest, with simple, explicit signposting to next steps. Ensuring that the language used is easy to understand, jargon-free and consistent will provide **clarity** and minimise the risk of misinterpretation. To be compelling the switching box needs to be **focussed** and succinct; too much information discourages consumers from reading and can create confusion. However compelling the message is, **direction** is key in moving consumers from taking the information on board to doing something about it. This means ensuring that all switching boxes incorporate signposting to further information, contact details and reassurances about the ease of switching. The illustration below sums up the framework:



Figure 1 Framework of switching box criteria

### 4.4 Simple graphs stand out and help consumers understand the impact of different rates

The simple, colourful graph used in the variants immediately caught

*"I found the graphs useful, that's what attracted my attention to read it – normally you get a letter, read the statement and throw it in the bin but those graphs drew me in"*

Low confidence / Low savings, Older, London

participants' attention and helped them visualise the difference in interest rates in an easy, low effort way.

#### 4.5 The type of communication used for the switching box can impact engagement

In the research two types of communication were tested; a statement and a rate reduction letter. The idea of a standalone letter was also explored, though not specifically tested. The switching box message was most impactful in the rate reduction letter; this change offered the most natural, logical flow to the introduction of the box. While many of the participants claimed that statements were generally the only communications they read, the switching box risked being overlooked by those who would habitually turn over the page to find their balance. The appeal of a standalone letter is mixed; while for some this feels like the most appropriate, focused route, overall this response seems to be driven more by not wanting the box included in another communication than by positively wanting a standalone

*"If I just received it on its own I'd just assume it's trying to sell me something"*

High confidence / High savings, Older, Glasgow

message about switching. On balance the research suggests that an unexpected, standalone communication may be more likely to be discarded as 'sales' than read carefully.

#### 4.6 V3, the cash illustrative 'short' letter is the most compelling variant tested

V3 was ranked as the easiest, clearest and most compelling variant across all groups. This is in part due to the context (a rate reduction) which draws participants' attention more powerfully than the other variants. It is also due to the combination of elements that together tell a cohesive, natural story with clear next steps. It feels personal, there is a logical link between the rate reduction notification and the switching message, and consumers can easily see what they need to do next.

*"I think it's good that it's a letter and not a statement, it's from someone, which makes it more personal as well, and I think it's fair, it's basically saying, 'Look, it's going down but here are some options'"*

High confidence / High savings, Younger, London

## 5 Switching Box Evaluation

### 5.1 Overview

Four variants of the switching box were tested;

Variant	Format	Communication Type	Provider's best-paying product	Average of best-paying products from	Interest in % terms	Cash Illustration	Increment per £1,000

				competitors			
V1	LONG	STATEMENT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
V1a	LONG	STATEMENT	✓		✓	✓	✓
V2	SHORT	STATEMENT	✓	✓	✓		
V3	SHORT	RATE REDUCTION	✓	✓		✓	✓

The variants are shown in Section 10, the Appendix to the report.

Before looking at the detailed response to the variants it is worth highlighting two key findings relating to how the switching box is introduced and explained.

In all of the variants the switching box was noticed; the graph appeared to be crucial in facilitating this. At the same time, the purpose of the box was not clear to all; it can be seen as more pushy than helpful. It also raises a lot of questions, particularly on the three variants where information on other providers' rates is given. The motivation for providing the information causes particular confusion and suspicion:

- If my own provider has a better rate, why haven't they put me on it?
- Are they trying to sell me a new account?
- Why would any provider point a customer towards a competitor?
- Are providers legally bound to provide this information?

*"I don't trust it because I'm thinking, 'Why are they doing that, that's a bit odd?' There's obviously a science behind banking, like supermarkets, they play with people's minds – Asda say they're cheaper than Sainsbury's but I wonder if they're just pulling these figures out the air."*

High confidence / High savings, Older,  
Glasgow

Unless these questions can be addressed or pre-empted by an explanation of why this information is being provided – e.g. with explicit reference to the FCA's involvement (or the involvement of whichever regulator/legal body requires the information to be provided)– it is likely that the communications will be dismissed without being read, due to mistrust of the provider's motives. Equally, how the switching box is introduced is crucial to engaging attention and aiding understanding. There was a strong sense in the research that without an easily understandable link between the opening points and the switching box, the communications will feel disjointed and as a result difficult to read; the opening phrases might grab attention but readership may quickly drop off.

## 5.2 How each of the variants performed against the criteria of Effort, Clarity, Focus and Direction

In the following section we provide the detailed response to the variants. For each variant there is an illustration showing how the variant performed against the four criteria using a sliding scale where red is poor and green is positive. These ratings were derived during the analysis process using three data sources: participants' individual responses, individual ranking of the variants and the group discussions.

### 5.3 Detailed responses to the variants

#### V1: 'long' box format showing provider's own best rate and average of best rates elsewhere, included in a statement letter

Overall V1 did not perform well against the criteria of effort, clarity, focus and direction.



For most participants the initial reaction to V1 was a sense of feeling overwhelmed by the length of the letter and the amount of text. While the switching box was noticed in all of the variants, in the two longer versions, V1 and V1a, the amount of text within the box makes it recede to a degree; it has less standout. There was an assumption that in order to really digest the information being presented several re-reads would be needed. As such, the variant did not perform well against the requirement for it to be low effort.

Some of the language was perceived to be vague, for example 'most similar features'. Also, the flow of information was off-putting; sometimes it appeared detailed, at other points it felt vague. This meant that while it performed slightly better on clarity than on effort, some participants found it difficult to follow and felt they would be unlikely to read the variant in its entirety. The reference to 'market alternative' created genuine confusion; the term itself didn't resonate readily with all. More commonly, as already discussed, the concept of a savings provider telling its customers they could get better rates elsewhere raised most questions; while some decided that it must be a result of an official or legal requirement to do so, others could not get past their belief that it made no sense for any business to direct its customers towards its competitors.

*"It was giving me too many options, because it's a bit vague, in as much as there's a 'leading market' that's going to give you whatever"*

Low confidence / Low savings, Older, London

The amount of text encouraged participants to 'jump' to the visual element of the box, meaning that some of the detail and context was missed, causing the variant as a whole not to feel focussed.

*"If I got this I feel like I'd need to read it at least a couple of times to have any idea what's going on."*

High confidence / Low savings, Younger, Leeds

By those who read it more fully, some of the information such as detail about their existing savings account was considered by some to be superfluous, while the additional information provided such as '£5.50 more' was in some cases seen as excessive or repetitive. A minority saw information such as '£5.50 more' as patronising.

*"It's a bit patronising; I know that £5 is more than £2!"*

Low confidence / Medium savings, Younger, Glasgow

The tendency to drop off and fail to read to the end of the variant meant that the call to action and the details of what to do next were often overlooked.

### V1a: 'long' box format showing provider's own best rate but no competitor rate information included in a statement letter



Responses to V1a were very similar to those for V1, but the lack of information about competitor rates meant there was less confusion or concern about the purpose of the box, and the slightly reduced amount of text made it feel easier to read. As a result it performed slightly better than V1 in terms of effort, clarity and focus.

Nevertheless, the final sentences of the variant still tended to be missed. As such its performance in terms of direction did not improve.

*"The second one (V1) makes it a little bit more complicated and get you thinking a bit more. I think (V1a) is very clear and easy to understand"*

Low confidence / Medium savings, Older, Leeds

*"When I saw (V1a), I think I liked that more because I trusted why the bank were sending me it... 'Our best rate', so it didn't have the competitor rates"*

High confidence / High savings, Younger, London

### V2: 'short' box format showing provider's own best rate and average of best rates elsewhere, using percentages only, included in a statement letter

Initial reactions to V2 were relatively positive, but this changed quite quickly, suggesting an initial 'burst' of enthusiasm fostered by the apparent simplicity of the letter. One key improvement for many was the inclusion of the customer's current balance in the switching box. This was felt to make it easier to calculate how much interest could be

*"It was too much like a flyer, it didn't feel relevant to my account. I get letters through from my bank all the time and it's like one of those where you open the top of the envelope and it says, 'You could borrow £20,000' and you glance at it without even taking it out of the envelope, it felt a little bit like that to me"*

High confidence / Low savings, Younger, Leeds

earned, and also meant the reader didn't need to turn the page to see the bottom line they were most interested in.

On reflection, however, most participants found V2 too simple; the lack of information meant that many questions were left unanswered. One of the key criticisms was that the letter looked unfinished – the large amount of white space left below the switching box on the page feels rushed and for some makes the letter feel more like a flyer than a letter from a financial provider. Others felt the lack of text gave the impression of an abrupt, clinical, formal communication.



Once the initial, fleeting sense of a document requiring very little effort to read had passed, most participants expected that if they were to do anything as a result of receiving V2 they would have to put a lot of effort into finding out the missing information. While this variant performed better on effort than V1 and V1a, it was not as 'low effort' as many at first thought.

Equally, V2 did not do well in terms of providing clarity for the participants. 'Earn more by switching' stood out and attracted attention but the discussions revealed some misinterpretations around the term 'switching'. For some, 'switching' immediately signals moving to another provider. For some consumers this is a positive thing, while others see switching away as more effort than reward. Others felt unsure as to whether the provider wanted them to switch within the same company or move away. There was also some uncertainty about how the comparison rate was derived and what it was based on.

The variant performed well on Focus. Having less information in the switching box gave it more prominence on the page; this was welcomed by participants. At the same time, the sparseness of the text accentuated phrases that many participants found disconcerting such as 'restrictions and exclusions may apply'. This phrase was perceived as signalling a catch and weakened any reassurance that the better rate would apply to an account with similar features to the one people were on now.

V2 performed poorly against Direction across the groups; with no call to action and no contact details, many participants were left feeling that there were no obvious next steps to be taken. It was clear from comments made earlier in the discussions that without signposting and explicit next steps most of the participants would be unlikely to take any further action.

*"If it just had the money bit on it, some comparison, also information about how to go about switching if you're interested. So just that, not too much"*

Low confidence / Low savings, Older, London

### V3: 'short' box format showing provider's own best rate and average of best rates elsewhere, using a cash illustration only, included in a rate reduction letter

For most of the participants Variant 3 was the most effective communication tested irrespective of the order in which it was presented.

Without being prompted to do so, the letter appeared to be read more carefully than the other variants and more information was retained. The initial reaction of some participants was quite indignant. Despite everyone being a saver there was little recognition or recall of having received a rate reduction letter in the past, and some questioned whether this was possible or even legal. It was very important to probe carefully around the responses to the letter, to unpick the extent to which it was the rate reduction message or the switching message that was compelling. While almost everyone acknowledged that it was the rate reduction that caught and held their attention, it was possible to identify specific elements that in combination made the variant more impactful than the others;

- V3 has the appearance of a 'proper' letter – conveys a sense that it needs to be read
- It has a personal feel and tone, and the letter format encourages onward reading without seeming too onerous
- The serious nature of the message – you will earn less interest – is commonly translated into 'you will lose money', adding to the compulsion to read on
  - A minority feel manipulated; giving the two pieces of information together makes some feel that if they ignore the letter they will feel foolish

*"It's good they're telling you but I don't like my strings being pulled so obviously like that"*

High confidence / High savings, Older, Glasgow

In addition to the strength of the impact the letter had, it

also performed well on the four criteria.

Of all the variants tested, V3 felt the easiest to read with the lowest amount of effort. This was attributed to the logical flow:

- Rate reduction/change in T&Cs = **TRIGGER**
- Call to action (switching box) = **SOLUTION**
- Offer of support (happy to help) = **PUSH**
- Contact details (phone number, website) = **NEXT STEPS**



The link between the news of the rate reduction (bad news) and the switching message (opportunity to do something about it) makes the purpose of the switching box and the letter very clear; the two elements combined make more sense than they do separately. As already discussed, understanding of the message is enhanced when the purpose is clear; the message is perceived as helpful rather than pushy. 'Earn more by switching' attracts the

reader's attention as it did in V2, but the term 'switching' remains open to misinterpretation.

With the rate reduction message signalling a more pressing 'need' to earn more, any confusion recedes; participants also appear more comfortable about switching providers.

Arguably this is due to the rate reduction rather than the switching box. The inclusion of a cash illustration rather than percentages adds clarity, although the consensus across the groups is that both are helpful and should be included.

*"It's helpful to have the figure as well as it makes it more real"*

Low confidence / Low savings, Older, London

The variant also performed well on focus; the short form box was felt to give the information within it more prominence. As with V2 this perception was not always positive; 'Exclusions and restrictions may apply' stands out more than in the longer format boxes used in V1 and V1a and is not a popular inclusion as it raises questions about the similarity of the higher interest accounts referenced.

*"V2 was very straight to the point but V3 made it into a catchier, more persuasive letter, whereas V1 just went too far"*

High confidence / Low savings, Younger, Leeds

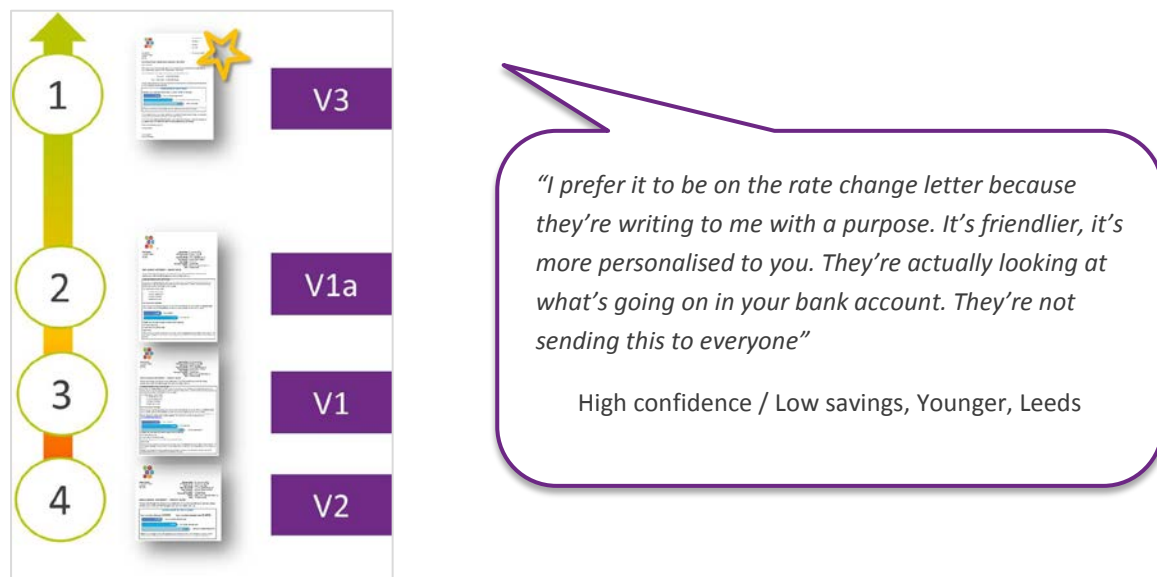
On Direction, V3 performed better than all of the other variants. Next steps are described - *If you decide to move your money elsewhere, to another XYZ bank account, close your account or want to speak to someone about this* – and support is offered – *we*

*are happy to help*. This is followed by contact details – a phone number and URL. As a result of both the information and the flow, the next steps are clear and the tone of the communication is encouraging rather than pushy.

While the rate reduction appeared to be boosting the likelihood of taking any action, it is not clear whether a rate increase would have the same effect. Many thought the fact that the rate was changing in combination with a message about there being better rates available would make them look around even if their rate was improving. Some however concluded that their pleasure at being told their rate had gone up would probably be enough, and that they wouldn't want to consider moving as they were already going to be earning more interest than previously.

#### 5.4 Overall response to the variants

As discussed above there was a clear gap between V3 and the other variants when participants ranked them in order of which they felt would be most likely to prompt action:



**Figure 2 Overall response to the variants (ranking)**

There are a number of elements contributing to the success of V3;

- A 'proper' letter, with a logical flow/narrative
- Personal feel and tone, relates to 'my' account
- Serious context: rate reduction = 'you will lose money': compelling reason to engage
- Switching box highlights a solution – with cash illustration
- An offer of support 'happy to help'
- Clear contact details facilitating next steps

## 6 Language

### 6.1 Overall response to the language used in the variants

Across the variants different language was used to test whether some terms were more readily understood, easier to read and more engaging than others. Several themes emerged from this;

- The word 'switching' can be confusing, and also scary for some consumers
- Vague, ambiguous language is a deterrent, prompting disengagement
- Inconsistency of language breeds mistrust
- Tone needs to work hard to avoid feeling pushy or patronising – needs to reassure

## 6.2 'Switching' can be confusing and intimidating

While not universally the case, many automatically think of changing provider when they see or hear the word 'switching'. This appears to be driven by experiences in other sectors such as energy and general insurance, but also by recent widespread coverage of current account switching. We know from other research conducted that 'switching' is sometimes seen as something that suits a certain type of consumer; people who spend a lot of time comparing rates, shopping around, moving from one provider to another very regularly. It is easy for people who don't see themselves as 'the switching type' to disengage from communications they think are not aimed at them personally.

*"The concept of switching is terrifying. I can't be bothered, there's going to be a whole rigmarole involved."*

Low confidence / Low savings, Older, London

Others see switching as a drastic step – something they might do as a last resort if they were really dissatisfied or the relationship with the provider had broken down. While some do see switching in this context as 'moving' and not necessarily meaning moving away, this appears to be the minority. There is a perception that moving accounts at all, internally or externally, is a 'hassle'. For some, there is some sense of resentment at having to switch internally to get a better rate; questions are raised as to why, if there is a better rate, they've not already been offered it or (with their permission) moved onto it.

*"The word 'switching' is probably a tad more scary because you've got to actively do something about it."*

Low confidence / Medium savings, Older, Leeds

In contrast, people who have had a positive experience of switching and see the benefits of moving as outweighing

*"I quite like that, I have that on my gas and electric statement and I love it because I'm constantly switching and going where it's cheaper. I like the fact that it tells you that the choice is there but I'd be wondering why I wasn't on the higher rate already and why I'd not just been transferred to that, but I'd also be tempted to move."*

High confidence / Low savings, Younger, Leeds

any downside find the headline 'Earn More By Switching' appealing;

### 6.3 Vague, ambiguous language is a deterrent, prompting disengagement

Using a term such as ‘market alternative’ used in V1 to refer to external/other providers’ rates is seen as ambiguous. ‘Market alternative’ is not a common term for most consumers and although many can correctly guess what it means, it is a good example of how when language makes people have to work to interpret it they can easily disengage because of the effort involved.

Once it is understood, there is a further lack of clarity as there is no indication of who/which provider it refers to.

As of 10 January 2016 the savings account with the most similar features that we can offer is our Everyday Saver

V1

V1a

*“What they tell you is quite vague anyway, it’s like, ‘But where can I get that!?’”*

Low confidence / Medium savings,  
Younger, Glasgow

Equally ‘similar’ causes concern; when ‘similar features’ are referred to without specifying what these are, there can be suspicion that ‘similar’ is used to avoid saying ‘same’ or ‘equivalent’. Added to this, many can’t remember the exact details of their own account features, so referring to ‘similar’ is too vague. This can create a degree of mistrust, or an expectation that there will be a catch: the higher rate won’t really be available on the same terms as the account held currently.

*“It’s quite vague, but I suppose it would mean easy access or whatever, they need to emphasise that a bit more”*

High confidence / High savings, Younger, London

### 6.4 Inconsistency of language can create mistrust

Inconsistency, particularly in account naming, causes confusion and can lead to suspicion about the provider’s motivations. Different names suggest that the terms will not be the same. The communication needs to add clarity on how the features of the two accounts mentioned differ.

You’ve had your **Instant Saver** for a little while now, and we know how important it is to make the most of your savings. So now might be a good time to consider if it’s still the best option or whether there’s another savings account out there that could pay more interest or suit you better.

Your Instant Saver currently offers:

- An interest rate of 0.20%.
- A minimum deposit of £1.
- Unlimited withdrawals.
- Interest paid annually.

**How this account compares.**

As of 10 January 2016 the savings account with the most similar features that we can offer is our **Everyday Saver** with an interest rate of **0.75% variable**, but there may be other suitable accounts within our range.

V1

V1a

Avoiding using different terms when referring to the same thing will also eliminate confusion. The examples below show how in two of the documents – V1 and V1a – three different terms were used when referring to competitor rates; ‘the three highest paying easy access accounts’, the ‘highest paying accounts’ on the market and ‘the three highest paying equivalent accounts’.

The three highest-paying **easy access accounts** across the market on 10 January offered an average rate of **1.08% variable**.

V1

V1a

Highest paying accounts on the market\*: £10.80 (**£8.80 more**)

V1

V1a

\*Based on an average of the three highest paying **equivalent accounts** on the market at 10 January 2016

V1

V1a

V2

V3

*"I appreciate them telling us what other banks are providing, even though it's not in their best interest. I want to feel reassured that I'm getting a good deal but also aware if there's a better one out there. I don't want too much information about alternative providers but I want to know that the accounts they're talking about are the same or at least really, really similar"*

High confidence / Low savings, Younger, Leeds

When it comes to how the ‘own provider’ best rate is described, all of the alternatives used in the variants – ‘our best rate’ ‘our best interest rate’ and ‘our highest paying savings account’ – all are clear and considered suitable descriptors. In line with the desire for communications to be succinct, however, there is a slight preference for ‘our best rate’.

Describing competitor rates can be more confusing. Across the variants three options were used: ‘Rates available elsewhere’, ‘other providers’ and ‘market alternative’. ‘Rates available elsewhere’ and ‘other providers’ were both understood. The term ‘providers’ was also used by the participants themselves, often interchangeably with terms like ‘other banks’ or companies. The only comment that both terms solicited was that it would be good to know where the ‘rates available elsewhere’ were, and who the ‘other providers’ were.

‘Market alternative’ in contrast is confusing for two reasons. Firstly, the phrase is not common in consumer language; most people can work out the meaning but it is not a phrase they would use themselves. Secondly, ‘alternative’ can suggest some differences between accounts; it does not have the same weight as ‘equivalent’.

## 6.5 Tone needs to work hard to avoid feeling pushy or patronising

Generally speaking the tone of the variants was not a concern, but some phrases did polarise views; for example the introduction to V1 and V1a was seen as friendly and open by some while other participants felt patronised.

You've had your Instant Saver for a little while now, and we know how important it is to make the most of your savings. So now might be a good time to consider if it's still the best option...

V1

V1a

*"The simpler the better: I know you find it patronising but it's written for the masses, people are lazy and some people may not understand."*

Low confidence / Medium savings, Younger, Glasgow

Equally, some participants felt that some phrases used were intended to push them away; they didn't want to feel their bank didn't want them as customers. It was evident that people wanted to feel empowered to act, not forced or persuaded into it.

If you decide to move your money elsewhere, to another XYZ bank account, close your account or want to speak to someone about this, we are happy to help.

V3

*"It feels like they're forcing you to switch accounts, even if you don't have to."*

High confidence / High savings, Older, Glasgow

*"I'm still confused as to why my bank's sending me this, trying to persuade me to go elsewhere, not offering to match what the other rates are, I wouldn't trust it in that sense. I just wouldn't trust the message because why are they trying to turn away my business?"*

High confidence / High savings, Younger, London

## 7 Visual, layout and type of communications

Reactions to the different layouts and visuals were fairly consistent and in line with previous communications research we have conducted; white space is off-putting and can make a document look unfinished/unprofessional, there needs to be a natural, logical flow to the narrative, using bullet points and short sentences rather than having too much dense text.

Graphics and cash illustrations demonstrate the benefits of a higher rate very clearly, while including percentages as well allows for comparison elsewhere. Using colour and bold text to give key pieces of information and calls to

*"The diagram is eye-catching. The colours and the percentages draw you in."*

High confidence / High savings, Older, Glasgow

*"I'd quite like those arrows to be a bit bigger and then with the figure underneath it, rather than all the writing and the text at the bottom, because that could make it a bit more accessible, I suppose, and make you read it a little bit more"*

High confidence / Low savings, Younger, Leeds

action more prominence is valued; some participants felt this technique could have been used more extensively in some of the variants, especially the two longer ones.

While there are some reservations about flow when the box is included in a statement letter, there is no suggestion that it should be placed on the back page. The way participants told us they read statements (if at all) the box would be missed altogether if it came last.

We also wanted to explore whether consumers felt a standardised format was needed. While a minority felt that providers should have freedom to provide the information required of them in their own style, there was general agreement that a standardised format would be best as it would become more familiar over time and as a result easier to read.

*"If they're regular then you've got comparisons, clear, concise."*

Low confidence / Low savings,  
Older, London

Participants holding accounts with different providers made the point that standardisation would make for easier comparison.

*"The problem is, if you've got savings with several banks, you can't compare the letters and work out who's telling you what. I'd prefer it to be standardised but personalised as well, there's nothing wrong with things being standardised and it would certainly make life easier"*

Low confidence / Medium savings, Older, Leeds

There was also a minority view that standardisation would give providers less opportunity to manipulate the information they were providing, and that this in turn would increase transparency.

To summarise, there were some clear pointers in terms of maximising impact:







	Avoid excessive white space	→	In V2, the white space makes it look unfinished and unprofessional
	There needs to be a natural and logical flow to the communication	→	V3 contains a trigger followed by a positive call to action and next steps
	Include both percentages and monetary examples in the graphic	→	Both are needed to aid comparison between accounts
	Less narrative = more impactful	→	For the majority, the less text there is the greater the likelihood of the message standing out
	Consensus for a standardised switch box format	→	An easier way of comparing accounts; gives banks less opportunity to manipulate, increasing transparency
	No suggestion that the box would have a greater chance of being read on the back of the letter	→	Despite concerns about flow, the front page positioning of the box seems to work best

Figure 3 Points to consider for layout

## 7.1 Most suitable type of communication for the switching box

### 7.1.1 Letter with rate decrease plus switching box (as in V3)

As already highlighted, this research suggests that a letter with 'news' such as a rate decrease or other change to terms and conditions is likely to give the switching box message most purpose and relevance;

- ✓ It allows for a logical flow within the communication
- ✓ A letter feels more personal and therefore more engaging than a statement document
- ✓ The particular combination of a rate decrease and switching box message creates the most impact and the biggest trigger for action
- ✗ A rate increase letter is unlikely to have the same impact; receiving an increase, plus the perceived ease and convenience of not moving/not having to shop around outweighs the benefit of a slightly higher rate

### 7.1.2 Statement plus switching box (as in the other variants tested)

While a statement is claimed to be the most commonly read of all bank communications engagement is low; seeing the balance is the main priority, so there is a risk that the page will be turned before the switching box is read.

- ✓ Likely to be opened and looked at, albeit briefly
- ✓ A trusted, expected communication
- ✗ Seeing the 'bottom line' is the priority: the box may be overlooked
- ✗ Many consumers have chosen to be paperless and won't receive hard copy statements

### 7.1.3 Standard letter with switching box (not tested as a variant, but discussed)

The idea of a standalone letter makes sense intuitively to many; the message will have stand out and won't distract from or get overshadowed by other information being provided. At the same time, there is a strong sense that a standalone letter would struggle to cut through and create engagement.

- ✓ Feels appropriate and important enough to have a standalone message, especially for those who don't really pay attention to their statements/don't receive statements
- ✗ As an unexpected, unsolicited communication there is a strong chance it will be perceived as sales and therefore disregarded

Alternatives were briefly discussed and a standalone email seems unlikely to work any better.

There is some unease surrounding email, with many individuals concerned about phishing and other financial scams and fraud. Several participants said they wouldn't open an unsolicited email from their financial providers.

*"If I get emails from the bank, I'm always a little bit hesitant to open them in case they're dodgy ones, so I think I'd rather receive something like this in a letter or when you're logged onto your account."*

Low confidence / Low savings, Older, London

The idea of receiving a secure email or online message while logged into online banking was more popular and most felt they would look at messages received this way.

Views on pop-up messages were divided, with some liking the idea, to catch their attention, and others thinking it would be an irritation and a distraction from what they had gone online to do.

## 8 Do's and Don'ts – a checklist for the Switching box

The learnings from the various elements of the research – the initial reactions, detailed responses and discussions around layout, language and format – allowed us to put together a checklist of 'Do's', some things to avoid, and a couple to consider the feasibility of;

### 8.1 Include:

Reassure on the simplicity of moving accounts and banks	Use graphs, colours and embolden text to catch the reader's attention	Make it easy to read by using bullet points and short sentences
Ensure people know their next step and add contact details to encourage this	Explain the FCA's role to give context to the inclusion of market alternatives	Include both monetary and percentage values
Remind people of their current savings account features to aid comparison	Make the communication as personalised as possible	Have a standard format for all providers

Figure 4 Checklist of 'Do's'

### 8.2 Avoid

Don't use differing terms when comparing account types	Avoid having too much text in the box itself	Avoid vague or confusing language such as 'similar', 'switching' or 'market alternative'
The communication should not feel forceful or scaremongering	Avoid white space	Avoid excessive formality and jargon

Figure 5 Checklist of 'Don'ts'

### 8.3 A couple of things to consider

Consider specifying equivalent accounts and alternative banks	Consider including projections of what customers could have earned in the past year
---------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Figure 6 Two things to consider

## 9 Conclusions and recommendations

### 9.1 Recap on the overall findings and what these mean

**Overall consumers seem to like the switching box.** The box is generally understood, even though there is confusion about why it is being provided. Once the purpose is explained and understood, the box itself is well received.

**As with any new initiative the switching box is not expected and its purpose not immediately understood by all.** There is a risk that the message will be discarded as it may be assumed to be a sales letter or an invitation to leave the provider.

**Consumers don't engage equally with all of the variants.** Any variant that is taken forward for development needs to adhere to a framework of guidelines for maximising engagement. It needs to be low effort, clear and easy to understand, focussed and succinct, with reassurances about the ease of moving savings around and a clear signpost to next steps. An explanation of the rationale for the switching box and the FCA's involvement should increase engagement.

**The graphic tested is engaging and aids understanding.** Visuals can and should be deployed in order to make the message as accessible as possible to as many people as possible.

**A standalone switching box letter is less likely to be read than a communication with a distinct purpose of its own.** Including the switching box within a communication providing other 'news' – with its own distinct purpose, that is considered by consumers to be relevant – seems likely to be the most productive solution.

**Consistent themes emerge around language and tone.** There is an opportunity to strengthen engagement, maximise understanding and increase likelihood to act if the correct language and tone is achieved.

**V3 is the most compelling variant with the most potential to trigger action.** The elements that work well within this variant – personalisation, narrative, flow, solution, support, next steps – can be built on and taken forward into further development for the next round of consultation.

### 9.2 Building on the impact of V3

The first point to highlight when drawing our conclusions is that while V3 stood out in this research as being expected to have the most impact and as such provides a useful example

of what an effective switching box message might look like, there was nevertheless scope for improvement;

- Provide more reassurance on the ease and simplicity of moving
- Avoid the word 'switching' in the blue headline (an alternative might be 'earn more by looking around' or 'could your savings earn you more interest?')
- Add an explanation of the FCA's role/rationale for the message
- Add % interest rate alongside the cash illustration
- Consider using more colour/bold text to make key points stand out
- Consider specifying equivalent accounts/alternative providers
- Consider including an illustration of what the saver could have earned over the past year as well as a future projection

### 9.3 3 recommendations for the next steps

In conclusion, we recommend implementing three core actions to ensure the switching box message is as effective as it can be:

1. **Set the scene, making the FCA's (or other body's) role clear** – to allay suspicions about motive and add weight to the message
2. **Take forward the most compelling elements of V3** – use the impact it already creates and build on it
3. **Look at the box within the wider context of the whole communication** – the narrative needs to flow naturally and logically

## 10 Appendix

### 10.1 Sample Profile

#### 10.1.1 Overview of the sample structure

- 6 x 90 minute group discussions split across 3 locations
  - 2 x London
  - 2 x Leeds
  - 2 x Glasgow
- Groups were split on the basis of their level of confidence in managing their personal finances, their level of savings, and their age.
- Total sample: 42 consumers

Criteria	Definition
<b>High confidence</b>	All had to agree with the following statement to qualify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>I am generally confident when dealing with my money and finances. I feel I understand the various product offerings and often make the correct decision about which will be best for my needs</i></li></ul>
<b>Low confidence</b>	All to agree with one of the following statements to qualify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>I am fairly confident when dealing with my money and finances, but I do sometimes struggle to know which financial products are right for my needs</i></li><li>• <i>I'm not at all confident dealing with my money and finances, and I often find choosing which financial products are for me a real challenge</i></li></ul>
<b>High savings</b>	All had to have savings over £15,000
<b>Medium savings</b>	All had to have savings within the range of £5,000 - £14,999
<b>Low savings</b>	All had to have savings between £100 and £4,999
<b>Younger</b>	All had to be between 21yrs – 44yrs
<b>Older</b>	All had to be between 45yrs – 70yrs

### 10.1.2 Additional sample criteria

- All had to hold a savings account
- All had to have opened their first savings account 2 or more years ago
- Mix of levels of financial confidence
- Mix of channels used for general banking
- Mix of types of savers (e.g. building up savings vs. using to manage their money)
- Mix of providers including banks and building societies
- Mix of types of savings accounts
  - Easy access, Cash ISA, Fixed term accounts (all must have an easy access / cash ISA account)
- Mix of savings levels low, medium and high
- Mix of attitudes to shopping around/switching
- Mix of males and females
- A good spread across the age bands in each group
- Mix of SEG AB/C1/C2/D
- All had to be sole / joint decision maker with regards to financial decisions in the household, including decisions regarding savings
- 2 per group had to be non-native English speakers
- Standard industry exclusions imposed – none to work, have worked or have a close friend or family member working in marketing of finance related industries
- 2 per group had to have switched (within same provider or elsewhere) in the last 3 years, the remainder to have either never switched, or not switched for at least 3 years

Group	Profile	Location	Detail
<b>Group 1</b>	High confidence  High savings  Younger	London (viewed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8 respondents</li> <li>• Even gender split</li> <li>• 2 non native English speakers               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ 1 Portuguese</li> <li>◦ 1 Mandarin</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 7 claimed to be saving for a specific purpose</li> <li>• 1 claimed to be saving to generate income from the interest</li> <li>• 4 had regular savings accounts</li> <li>• 4 had cash ISAs</li> <li>• Mix of savings providers from a range of established high street brands, smaller bank brands and smaller building society brands</li> </ul>
Group	Profile	Location	Detail

<b>Group 2</b>	Low confidence Low savings Older	London (viewed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 respondents</li> <li>• Even gender split</li> <li>• 2 non native English speakers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1 Spanish</li> <li>○ 1 Hindi</li> </ul> </li> <li>• All claimed to be saving for a specific purpose</li> <li>• 7 had regular savings accounts</li> <li>• 5 had cash ISAs</li> <li>• 1 had a children's savings account</li> <li>• Mix of savings providers from a range of established high street brands, smaller bank brands and smaller building society brands</li> </ul>
<b>Group 3</b>	High confidence Medium savings Younger	Leeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 respondents</li> <li>• Even gender split</li> <li>• 2 non native English speakers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1 Cantonese</li> <li>○ 1 Afrikaans</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 5 claimed to be saving for a specific purpose</li> <li>• 3 claimed to be generating income from interest on savings</li> <li>• 7 had easy access saving accounts</li> <li>• 6 had cash ISAs</li> <li>• 1 had regular savings accounts</li> <li>• 1 had children's savings accounts</li> <li>• Mix of savings providers from a range of established high street brands, smaller bank brands and smaller building society brands</li> </ul>
<b>Group</b>	<b>Profile</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Detail</b>
<b>Group</b>	Low confidence	Leeds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 respondents</li> <li>• 4 female, 3 male</li> </ul>


4	Medium savings  Older		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 non native English speakers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1 Spanish</li> <li>○ 1 Swedish</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 2 claimed to be saving for a specific purpose</li> <li>• 6 claimed to be generating income from interest on savings</li> <li>• 7 had easy access accounts</li> <li>• 1 had a fixed term bond</li> <li>• 4 had cash ISAs</li> <li>• 3 had regular savings accounts</li> <li>• 1 had children savings accounts</li> <li>• Mix of savings providers from a range of established high street brands, smaller bank brands and smaller building society brands</li> </ul>
<b>Group 5</b>	High confidence  High Savings  Older	Glasgow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 respondents</li> <li>• 4 females, 3 males</li> <li>• 2 non native English speakers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 1 Urdu</li> <li>○ 1 Punjabi</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 5 claimed to be saving for a specific purpose</li> <li>• 1 claimed to be saving to help generate income and build savings</li> <li>• 1 claimed to be savings to generate income from interest on savings</li> <li>• 1 had fixed term bonds</li> <li>• 3 had cash ISAs</li> <li>• 4 had regular savings accounts</li> </ul> <p>Mix of savings providers from a range of established high street brands, smaller bank brands and smaller building society brands</p>
Group	Profile	Location	Detail
<b>Group 6</b>	Low confidence  Medium Savings	Glasgow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 respondents</li> <li>• 3 males, 3 females</li> <li>• 2 non native English speakers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 2 Urdu</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	Younger		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6 claimed to be saving for a specific purpose</li> <li>• 2 claimed to be saving to generate income on savings</li> <li>• 6 had easy access accounts</li> <li>• 2 had cash ISAs</li> <li>• 5 had regular savings accounts</li> <li>• Mix of savings providers from a range of established high street brands, smaller bank brands and smaller building society brands</li> </ul>
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## 10.2 Stimulus

We tested four variants, each a communication including a switching box; two long form letters with a statement (V1 and V1a), and two short form letters – one with a statement (V2) and one with a rate reduction notification (V3). V1, V2 and V3 all showed an average competitor rate as well as the provider's own best available rate. V1a did not show any competitor rates.

V1



**John Smith**  
1 London Road  
London  
N1 1NN

**Issue Date:** 31 January 2016  
**Write to us at:** PO Box 1, B1 1BB  
**Call us on:** 0345 123 4567  
**Visit us online:** [www.xyzbankplc.co.uk](http://www.xyzbankplc.co.uk)  
**Your branch:** London Road, London  
**Sort Code:** 11-11-11  
**Account number:** 1234567890  
**IBAN:** GB01 XYZ 1234 567 8910 11  
**BIC:** XYZGB123456

**YOUR ACCOUNT STATEMENT – INSTANT SAVER**

Please read through the entries on your statement. If you think something is incorrect, please contact us on 0345 123 4567 straight away and we'll check it for you.

**Check your account is still right for you.**

You've had your Instant Saver for a little while now, and we know how important it is to make the most of your savings. So now might be a good time to consider if it's still the best option or whether there's another savings account out there that could pay more interest or suit you better.

Your Instant Saver currently offers:

- An interest rate of 0.20%.
- A minimum deposit of £1.
- Unlimited withdrawals.
- Interest paid annually.

**How this account compares.**

As of 10 January 2016 the savings account with the most similar features that we can offer is our **Everyday Saver** with an interest rate of 0.75% variable, but there may be other suitable accounts within our range.

Taking a look at the wider savings market, the three highest-paying easy access accounts across the market on 10 January offered an average rate of 1.08% variable. You can find out more about these options at [www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk](http://www.moneyadvice.service.org.uk)

Account Type	Interest Rate
Your account	0.20%
Our best rate	0.75%
Market alternative*	1.08%

Interest you could earn this year on every £1000 of savings.

XYZ Instant Saver: £2.00
Our best rate: £7.50 (£5.50 more)
Highest paying accounts on the market*: £10.80 (£8.80 more)


**Let us know.**

Making the move to another savings account is simple – sign in at [www.xyzbankplc.co.uk](http://www.xyzbankplc.co.uk) and select 'renewal options', call us on 0345 123 4567, or pop in branch. If you'd prefer to carry on saving in your Instant Saver you don't need to do anything.

\*Based on an average of the three highest paying equivalent accounts on the market at 10 January 2016 using [moneyadvice.service.org.uk](http://moneyadvice.service.org.uk). Restrictions and exclusions may apply.

## 10.2.2 V1a

V1A



**John Smith**  
1 London Road  
London  
N1 1NN

**Issue Date** 31 January 2016  
**Write to us at** PO Box 1, 51 188  
**Call us on** 0345 123 4567  
**Visit us online** [www.xyzbankplc.co.uk](http://www.xyzbankplc.co.uk)  
**Your branch** London Road, London  
**Sort Code** 11-11-11  
**Account number** 1134567890  
**IBAN** GB01 XYZ 1234 567 8910 11  
**BIC** XYZG5123456

**YOUR ACCOUNT STATEMENT – INSTANT SAVER**

Please read through the entries on your statement. If you think something is incorrect, please contact us on 0345 123 4567 straight away and we'll check it for you.

**Check your account is still right for you.**

You've had your Instant Saver for a little while now, and we know how important it is to make the most of your savings. So now might be a good time to consider if it's still the best option or whether we have another savings account that could pay more interest or suit you better.

Your Instant Saver currently offers:

- An interest rate of 0.10%.
- A minimum deposit of £1.
- Unlimited withdrawals.
- Interest paid annually.

How this account compares.

As of 10 January 2016 the savings account with the most similar features that we can offer is our Everyday Saver with an interest rate of 0.75% variable, but there may be other suitable accounts within our range.

0.10%

Your account

0.75%

Our best rate

Interest you could earn this year on every £1000 of savings.

XYZ Instant Saver: £1.00


Our best rate: £7.50 (£6.50 more)

Let us know.

Making the move to another savings account is simple – sign in at [xyzbankplc.co.uk](http://xyzbankplc.co.uk) and select 'renewal options', call us on 0345 123 4567, or pop in branch. If you'd prefer to carry on saving in your Instant Saver you don't need to do anything.

## 10.2.3 V2

V2



**John Smith**  
1 London Road  
London  
N1 1NN

**Issue Date** 31 January 2016  
**Write to us at** PO Box 1, 21 122  
**Call us on** 0345 123 4567  
**Visit us online** [www.xyzbankplc.co.uk](http://www.xyzbankplc.co.uk)  
**Your branch** London Road, London  
**Sort Code** 11-11-11  
**Account number** 1234567890  
**IBAN** GB01 XYZ 1234 567 8910 11  
**BIC** XYZGB123456

**YOUR ACCOUNT STATEMENT – INSTANT SAVER**

Please read through all the entries on your statement. If you think something is incorrect, please contact us on 0345 123 4567 straight away and we'll check it for you.

**EARN MORE BY SWITCHING**


**Your current balance: £4500      Your current interest rate: 0.20%**

0.20%	Your current interest rate
0.75%	Our best interest rate
1.05%	Rates available elsewhere*

\*Based on an average of the three highest paying similar accounts on the market at 10 January 2016 using moneyadvice.service.org.uk. Restrictions and exclusions may apply. All rates are APR/Gross.

## 10.2.4 V3

V3



Jane Smith  
1 London Road  
London  
N1 1NN

XYZ Bank PLC  
PO Box 1  
London  
E1 1BB  
  
31 January 2016

**Your Instant Saver interest rate is reducing in April 2016**

Dear Ms Smith

Following a review of our savings rates we are writing to let you know that the interest rate on your Instant Saver account will be reducing from 7 April 2016.

The rate applied to your Instant Saver account (on balances from £1):

Currently: 0.50% AER/Gross  
From 7 April 2016: 0.10% AER/Gross

The box below shows how much you could earn by switching from our accounts and those offered by other banks and building societies.

**EARN MORE BY SWITCHING**

Interest you could earn each year on every £1000 of savings:

£1.00	Your current savings account
£7.50	Our highest paying savings account
£10.50	Other providers*

\*Based on an average of the three highest paying equivalent accounts available elsewhere on the market at 10 January 2016 using moneyadvice.service.org.uk. Restrictions and exclusions may apply.

If you decide to move your money elsewhere, to another XYZ Bank account, close your account or want to speak to someone about this, we are happy to help.

If you have any questions about this letter or your interest rate change or would like to speak to us, please call us on 0345 123 4567 or visit [xyzbankplc.co.uk/savings](http://xyzbankplc.co.uk/savings).

Thank you for saving with XYZ.

Yours sincerely

William Smith  
Head of Savings