



European
Joint
Support Unit

Banking in France





PERSONAL BANK ACCOUNTS IN FRANCE

If you come on a recce, it is a good opportunity to open a bank account. You can usually initially open an account using a UK address which must be changed to your French one as soon as you find accommodation. You are free to open an account with any bank of your choice. There are two main kinds of bank account in France - a foreign account and a resident account. Most personnel will have a foreign account. Once your account is functional you will be given a RIB (Relevé d'identité bancaire) specifying your bank details. A spouse who is French cannot have a foreign account. There is a monthly charge in France for having a bank account unlike in the UK and this can vary between banks.

If you open an account with **HSBC** and already have (or also open before your departure) an account with them in the UK, the online mechanism for international Sterling / Euro transfers on-line between accounts is very easy, swift, and cost-effective.

A banking option that is recommended by many of the Officers posted to France is BRITLINE, an English-speaking French banking service which is part of **Credit Agricole** Normandy. <https://www.britline.com/banking.html> With them it is possible to set up an account from the UK, using a UK address and is relatively straightforward. They are extremely helpful, can sort most things by email, and can talk through everything in English, explaining pitfalls and recommending ways to go about things with a knowledge of the difference between UK and French banking. They also provide insurance policies.

A French bank account debit card is called a *Carte Bancaire* (known generally as a *Carte Bleue*). It is an International Visa debit card and is the most commonly accepted payment card in shops, restaurants etc. The Limit for contactless payments is currently 30 Euros.

ON DEPARTURE: PROCEDURE FOR CLOSING MY ACCOUNT

Firstly, if you have any active direct debits, you will need to cancel them. Then write to your bank saying that you wish to close your account and that you certify that you have no outstanding direct debits or cheques. You will need to specify the number of the last cheque used. The bank will then wait a couple of weeks for confirmation that there is no movement on the account before closing it. You should check that the procedure has been completed.