

SCOTTISH AND NORTHERN IRELAND BANKNOTES FACT SHEET**1. Apart from the Bank of England, which banks in the UK are authorised to issue banknotes?**

Bank of Scotland, Clydesdale Bank and Royal Bank of Scotland are authorised to issue their own notes in Scotland. In Northern Ireland, the authorised banks are: Bank of Ireland, Danske Bank (formerly known as Northern Bank), First Trust Bank, and Ulster Bank.

2. What is the legal position regarding Scottish and Northern Ireland banknotes?

Banknotes issued by the authorised banks in Scotland and Northern Ireland are **legal currency and can be accepted throughout the United Kingdom**. They are authorised and approved by the UK Parliament, a position that was established by legislation as long ago as 1845 and has been reinforced more recently by Part 6 of the Banking Act 2009.

3. What backing and protection exists for Scottish and Northern Ireland banknotes?

In accordance with current legislation, Scottish and Northern Ireland banknotes are fully backed at all times by ring-fenced backing assets partly held in Bank of England notes and UK coin and partly as balances on accounts maintained by the issuing banks at the Bank of England. Consequently, holders of genuine Scottish and Northern Ireland banknotes have the same level of protection as that available to holders of genuine Bank of England notes.

4. What denominations of banknotes do the authorised banks issue?

- In Scotland, all the authorised banks currently issue notes in the following denominations: £100, £50, £20, £10 and £5. Only Royal Bank of Scotland continues to issue £1 notes.
- In Northern Ireland, all the authorised banks issue notes in the following denominations: £100, £50, £20, and £10. Bank of Ireland and Ulster Bank also issue £5 notes.

5. Where can I find information about the design and security features of current Scottish and Northern Ireland banknotes?

Detailed information about the design and security features of Scottish and Northern Ireland notes can be accessed via the websites of the Association of Commercial Banknote Issuers (ACBI) (www.acbi.org.uk) and the Committee of Scottish Bankers (CSCB) (www.scotbanks.org.uk).

6. Are Scottish and Northern Ireland banknotes “legal tender”?

Scottish and Northern Ireland banknotes are not legal tender, not even in Scotland and Northern Ireland. In fact, no banknote (including Bank of England notes) qualifies for the term 'legal tender' in Scotland or Northern Ireland.

7. What does the term “legal tender” mean?

The term “legal tender” has very little practical meaning as far as ordinary, everyday transactions are concerned and it has no bearing on the acceptability of authorised banknotes as a means of payment, whether the notes are issued by Bank of England or by one of the Scottish and Northern Ireland authorised banks. The acceptability of any means of payment, including banknotes, is essentially a matter for agreement between the parties involved in a transaction. In practice, many transactions are settled using methods of payment other than cash (including debit cards, credit cards, and cheques) - none of which has “legal tender” status. This fact does not adversely affect the acceptability of those payment methods.

In reality, the phrase “legal tender” has a very narrow technical meaning in relation to the settlement of debt. If a debtor pays in legal tender the exact amount he owes under the terms of a contract, he has good defence in law if he is subsequently sued for non-payment of the debt.

8. What about counterfeit notes?

Incidences of counterfeiting of Scottish and Northern Ireland banknotes remain relatively low in comparison to the number of genuine notes on issue, but there are still some counterfeit banknotes in circulation. Further information relating to counterfeit notes can be viewed via the ACBI (www.acbi.org.uk) and CSCB (www.scotbanks.org.uk) websites.

Always remember to check your notes to ensure you do not get caught out.

9. What resources are available to help me identify genuine banknotes?

Help in identifying genuine notes is available using the following websites: ACBI (www.acbi.org.uk) and CSCB (www.scotbanks.org.uk). The ACBI site provides links to information about all current Scottish and Northern Ireland banknotes while the CSCB site contains detailed information about Scottish notes together with access to a banknotes tutorial and a downloadable poster. Some of the Scottish banks produce leaflets relating to specific note denominations and these can be obtained by contacting the issuing banks direct. A poster describing current Northern Ireland notes can be obtained by contacting any of the Northern Ireland issuing banks.

10. What if I come into possession of a counterfeit note?

Counterfeit notes are valueless.

If you know who gave you the note, take it to the police at once for investigation purposes. If you don't know who gave it to you, take it to a branch of the bank of issue. The bank will retain the counterfeit note for recording and destruction purposes and provide you with a receipt. You will only be reimbursed for the value of the note if it is subsequently found to be genuine.

Remember, it is a criminal offence to keep or to pass on a note that you know to be a counterfeit.

11. Useful contacts

You may find the following contact details useful if you need advice on matters relating to Scottish and Northern Ireland banknotes:

Organisation	Website	Phone
Bank of Ireland	www.bankofireland.co.uk/bank-of-ireland-group/bank-notes	02890 764402
Bank of Scotland	www.scotbanks.org.uk/banknotes_current_bank_of_scotland.php	0845 603 8212
Clydesdale Bank	www.scotbanks.org.uk/banknotes_current_clydesdale_bank.php	0141 242 3091/2
Danske Bank	www.danskebank.co.uk/en-gb/Personal/customer-service/customer-information/Pages/danske-bank-notes.aspx	02890 047972
First Trust Bank	www.firsttrustbank.co.uk/servlet/ContentServer?pagename=FTPPersonalPortal/FTContent_C/ft_download&c=FTContent_C&cid=1253690809929&channel=P004	02890 325599
Royal Bank of Scotland	www.rbs.com/about-rbs/g2/heritage/our-banknote/banknote-history.ashx	0131 523 7137
Ulster Bank	http://group.ulsterbank.com/about-us/our-history/our-banknotes.ashx	02890 340333
ACBI	www.acbi.org.uk	0131 473 7771
CSCB	www.scotbanks.org.uk	0131 473 7771

12. Design and security features of Bank of England banknotes

Information relating to the design and security features of Bank of England banknotes can be found on its website (www.bankofengland.co.uk/banknotes/index.htm), where you can also find information regarding the Bank of England's role in regulating the issue of Scottish & Northern Ireland banknotes.