
1. LINK BOARD. The LINK Board last met on 6th February. The Board received the CEO's report which described how access to cash remains an area of strong public interest. The Board also carefully considered and reviewed a report on LINK's overall operational position from the COO which included details on delivering high levels of resilience. The Board noted that this is a primary area of work and the Bank of England's focus following the issue of its Consultation on Operational Resilience for Recognised Payment System Operators and Specified Service Providers. The Executive Risk Summary was carefully reviewed and the Board considered the key risks currently facing LINK and was satisfied with the actions underway to mitigate these and the progress in strengthening LINK's approach to managing risk. The Board also noted that key risks facing LINK and their mitigation plans had remained stable since the previous report.

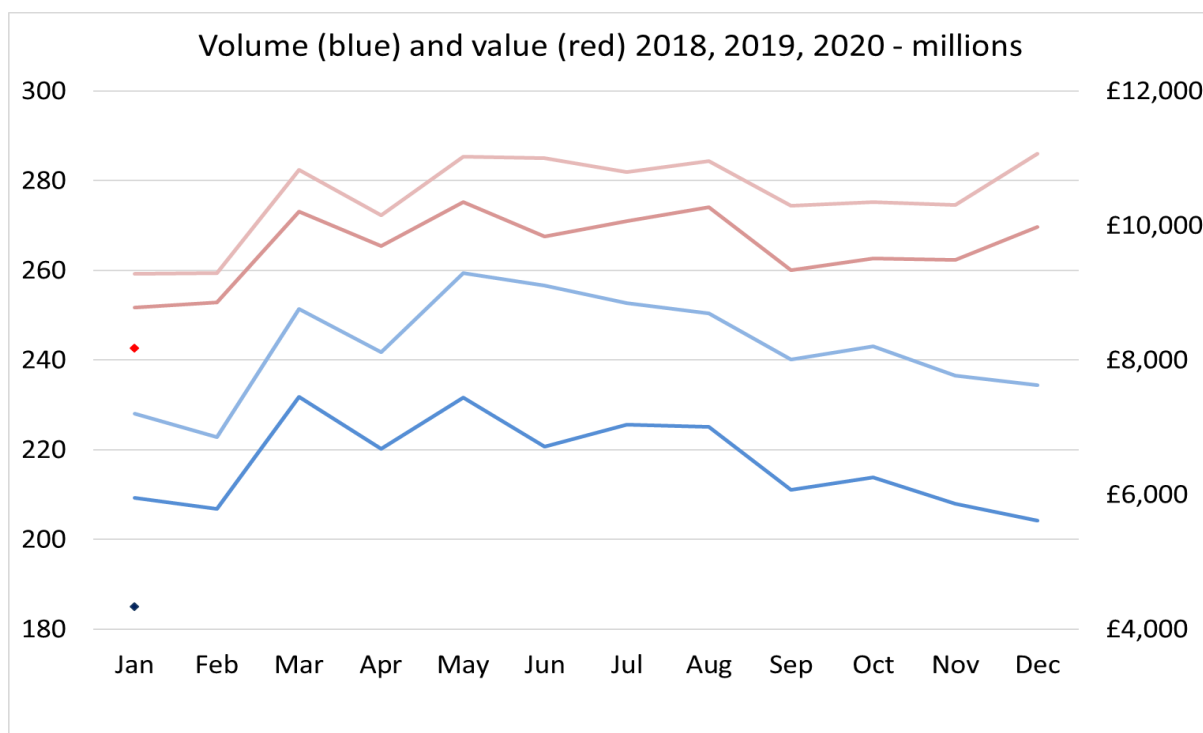
2. MAINTAINING ACCESS TO CASH. LINK is committed to protecting free access to cash for as long as consumers want it. The new **Community Request an ATM Initiative** has had 3,400 ATM requests. Almost 3,000 of these requests have been made via Which? and just under 1% of the total came from elected representatives, with the rest from members of the public or site owners. With the support of local MPs and councils, ATMs are being installed in new locations across the UK and eight of these new ATMs are now live. Requests continue to be received and the webpage remains live for further requests at <https://www.link.co.uk/consumers/request-access-to-cash/>.

LINK continues to work to ensure that every high street across the UK with at least five shops has a free ATM or Post Office within 1km of its centre. There are around 6,500 such high streets in the UK and only four do not have free cash access at present. LINK is running a competitive procurement process to have ATMs installed in these locations and new ATMs have recently gone live in Margate and Deal. LINK also has a programme to protect free-to-use ATMs that don't have another ATM within 1km. There are currently 2,900 ATMs in the programme. Of these, 221 have permanently closed or converted to charging. 107 of these have a Post Office within 1km where consumers can withdraw cash over the counter without a charge, 46 were not accessible to the general public and 18 have a security issue. This leaves 50 ATMs (1.7% of the total ATMs in the programme) that require replacement via either premiums or direct commissioning as necessary.

3. LINK VOLUMES and VALUES. The impact of some consumers reducing their cash usage continues to be seen across the LINK network. The number of LINK transactions fell by 11.6% between January 2019 and January 2020 and the rolling 12-month figure is now 11.3%. The value of cash withdrawn fell by 6.9% in January and 7.6% over rolling 12 months.

LINK Transaction Volumes (millions)													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2018	228	223	251	242	259	257	253	250	240	243	237	235	2,918
2019	209	207	232	220	232	221	226	225	211	214	208	204	2,608
2020	185												

LINK Transaction Values (£millions)													
Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
2018	£9,289	£9,294	£10,831	£10,158	£11,023	£11,006	£10,801	£10,954	£10,297	£10,346	£10,308	£11,065	£125,372
2019	£8,788	£8,859	£10,211	£9,701	£10,354	£9,837	£10,070	£10,271	£9,336	£9,512	£9,494	£9,985	£116,417
2020	£8,182												



- 4. ATM Numbers.** The total numbers of LINK ATMs continued to fall in January with an overall reduction of 113 ATMs between December and January to 60,549. This was made up of a fall of 154 free-to-use remote site ATMs, an increase of 16 pay-to-use machines and a reduction of 25 branch machines. The increase in charging ATMs in the past 12 months is 4,233 to 15,323 and because of the large fall in charging ATM numbers in 2018 the UK is still close to the number of pay-to-use ATMs in early 2017. The number of free-to-use ATMs is 45,226, which is about the same as in 2012.

LINK ATM Numbers by Type and Owner													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan-20
Branch	16,299	16,239	16,194	16,181	15,968	15,844	15,736	15,677	15,644	15,622	15,577	15,563	15,588
Free Remote	35,578	35,104	33,933	33,321	33,004	32,621	32,143	32,125	31,813	30,901	30,214	29,792	29,638
Total Free	51,877	51,343	50,127	49,502	48,972	48,465	47,879	47,802	47,457	46,523	45,791	45,355	45,226
Pay to use	11,090	11,602	12,744	13,147	13,359	13,496	13,670	13,640	13,796	14,529	15,111	15,307	15,323
Total ATMs	62,967	62,945	62,871	62,649	62,331	61,961	61,549	61,442	61,253	61,052	60,902	60,662	60,549
Bank and Building Society	26,445	26,365	26,291	26,260	26,076	25,896	25,710	25,641	25,576	25,414	25,305	25,272	25,148
Non Card Issuers	36,522	36,580	36,583	36,389	36,255	36,065	35,839	35,801	35,677	35,641	35,597	35,390	35,401
Total ATMs	62,967	62,945	62,874	62,649	62,331	61,961	61,549	61,442	61,253	61,055	60,902	60,662	60,549

5. INDUSTRY NEWS

UK'S CASH SYSTEM 'WILL COLLAPSE WITHOUT NEW LAWS'

The Access to Cash panel, led by Natalie Ceeney CBE, has called for Chancellor Rishi Sunak to save banknotes and coins, saying without urgent new laws the cash system could collapse within a decade. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-51550061>

RESPONDING TO LEAPS IN PAYMENTS: FROM UNBUNDLING TO STABLECOINS - SPEECH BY CHRISTINA SEGAL-KNOWLES, BANK OF ENGLAND

A speech delivered to the Westminster Business Forum by Christina Segal-Knowles, Bank of England Executive Director for Financial Markets Infrastructure, cautioned of the potential risks posed by mismanaged or poorly governed transformation in the world of payments.

<https://bit.ly/2V3OR7I>

VISA LAUNCHES SCHEME TO ENHANCE ACCESS TO CASH THROUGH RETAILERS

Shopkeepers will be paid to offer customers cashback in areas where cash machines are disappearing. It is hoped the move will boost footfall in rural communities. Visa's scheme marks the first time all the UK's banks will pay small stores to offer cashback - a service already provided by many large supermarkets. In addition, the initiative will also encourage individuals to visit and shop in their local communities, driving footfall and revenue for independent retailers. <https://www.visa.co.uk/about-visa/newsroom/press-releases.2962999.html>

BELGIAN BANKS WORKING ON AN INTEGRATED ATM PLATFORM TO OPTIMISE ACCESSIBILITY

Belgium's big four banks (Belfius, BNP Paribas Fortis, ING and KBC) are joining forces to set up an integrated network of bank-neutral ATMs. The banks intend to work together to set up an optimised ATM network that ensures consumers and merchants have secure access to cash and deposit facilities. At present, there is an oversupply of ATMs in certain locations (such as large towns, cities and shopping centres), whereas there are no or hardly any ATMs in other (often remote) locations. The new network will incorporate a more balanced distribution of ATMs.

<https://www.bnpparibasfortis.com/newsroom/press-release/belgian-big-banks-working-on-an-integrated-atm-platform-for-optimum-accessibility>

6. LINK PRESS RELEASES

FIRST COMMUNITY REQUEST ATM IN WALES GOES LIVE IN NEW TREDEGAR

The town of New Tredegar in Caerphilly has become the first location in Wales to receive a new free to use ATM, as part of a commitment to ensure every high street in the UK has free access to cash. Working with the local MP, Gerald Jones, LINK, the UK's main ATM cash machine network, has installed a new free-to-use ATM in Premier Mount View Stores on Commercial Street. Prior to the ATM going live, the nearest free-to-use machine was in nearby Aberbargoed, around 2.5 miles away.

<https://www.link.co.uk/about/news/first-community-request-atm-in-wales-goes-live-in-new-tredegar/>

THE VILLAGE OF SILSOE IN BEDFORDSHIRE HAS A NEW FREE TO USE ATM, AS PART OF A COMMITMENT TO ENSURE EVERY HIGH STREET IN THE UK HAS FREE ACCESS TO CASH.

LINK, the UK's main ATM cash machine network, has installed a new free-to-use ATM in the local newsagents. The machine replaces a charging machine in the same shop and is one of the first ATMs to be installed through LINK's community request scheme.

<https://www.link.co.uk/about/news/new-free-to-use-atm-goes-live-in-silsoe/>