



**PRESS RELEASE**

**Wednesday 13 March 2019**

**SILENCE IS GOLDEN: SKIPTON BUILDING SOCIETY BACKS DISABLED ACCESS DAY**

Skipton Building Society continues to support accessibility ahead of Disabled Access Day (16 March).

Skipton became the first financial services company to partner with AccessAble, which provides a series of online guides highlighting the accessibility support available in a variety of businesses and industries.

Since the launch of the partnership, Skipton can reveal that over 2,300 people have viewed their page on AccessAble, with 58% going on to download the guides – meaning more than 1,300 people have benefitted since the launch in December 2018.

The partnership between Skipton AccessAble was launched in December for International Day for Persons with Disabilities, with research revealing the difficulties of shopping on the high street. Paralympian Hannah Cockroft then filmed her own experience of shopping on a busy high street, documenting her experience on a GoPro camera. It was revealed that four in 10 UK adults with some form of mental or physical disability are unable to visit their local shops due to barriers.

Paralympian Hannah Cockroft said: "I'm really pleased with the reaction we've had to the accessibility campaign with Skipton Building Society. It shocked me when filming around Leeds City centre, how inaccessible it is, and how I've happily settled for that in everyday life, but since filming, it's encouraged me to shout louder and question why this is so accepted in society? The feedback has been overwhelmingly supportive of the fact that there needs to be changes made and it's great to see other disabled people stepping up and voicing their concerns about their local areas in response."

In a further move to consider the impact of customers with accessibility needs, Skipton has introduced Silent Interactive Voice Response (IVR) to their call centre. The Silent IVR provides callers with the option to turn off the hold music when waiting on a call. Of UK adults polled, more than a quarter revealed that loud music when shopping on the high street caused distress and Skipton understands that this may also be accurate when it comes to "hold" music.

Over the last three months, figures show that, on average, 35.6% of callers are now opting for the silent option, with each month increasing – starting at an average of 32% in December and peaking at 38% on average in February.

Skipton is aware that almost 50% of its customer base faces some form of accessibility requirement and, with the AccessAble partnership, is working hard to provide the best customer service to all its customers.

Skipton Building Society, Principal Office: The Bailey Skipton, BD23 1DN

Skipton Building Society is a member of the Building Societies Association. Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority and the Prudential Regulation Authority, under registration number 153706, for accepting deposits, advising on and arranging mortgages and providing Restricted financial advice. Principal Office, The Bailey, Skipton, North Yorkshire BD23 1DN.

Claire Davey, Director Direct Distribution, said: “We want all people to feel like they’re in a good place, and sometimes listening to hold music might not be as enjoyable for some as it is for others, particularly for those with accessibility needs. Our silent hold option now offers all our customers the opportunity to wait in silence. And this has proven to be very popular. In the short space of time we have been trailing this with our customers over a third have chosen that option. We want to help create a society where nobody feels left out and in doing this our customers simply have more control over their customer experience.”

A free prize draw will be held in all Skipton Building Society branches from 13 March – 16 March, with the opportunity to win a prize. Pop in to [your local branch](#) to find out more.

## ENDS

For further information, or to arrange interviews, please contact the Skipton Press Office on 03456 017247, email [newsline@skipton.co.uk](mailto:newsline@skipton.co.uk) or visit the press section of our website at [www.skipton.co.uk](http://www.skipton.co.uk).

Kayleigh Hunt, Corporate Communications Assistant

If outside Press Office hours (8.30am – 5pm, Monday to Friday), please call 07793 699 878.

### Editors’ notes

1. Skipton is the UK’s fourth largest building society, with over one million customers, £22bn of assets and a national presence represented by its network of 88 branches. Skipton offers mortgages, savings and restricted financial advice. It heads the Skipton Building Society Group, whose subsidiary companies include Skipton International Limited and significant interests in estate agency and related businesses through the Connells group.
2. Skipton Building Society is rated by two major credit rating agencies. Moody’s assigns a long term local and foreign currency bank deposit rating of Baa1 with a positive outlook and a short term rating of P-2. Fitch assigns the long-term Issuer Default Rating (IDR) as A- with a stable outlook and a short-term IDR rated F1.
3. 2018 saw Skipton named for the fourth year running as one of the UK’s Top 100 Companies to Work For. The *Sunday Times* list is widely acknowledged as the most searching and extensive research into employee engagement carried out in the country.
4. Skipton was named Best National Building Society for the fifth year running in the 2018 What Mortgage awards and Building Society of the Year in the 2018 Moneyage Mortgage Awards. Skipton was also named Which? Recommended Provider for both savings accounts and mortgages in 2018.
5. In August 2017, Skipton achieved Investors in People Platinum, of which there are only 2% of accredited organisations to achieve this level (as of December 2018).
6. Skipton was the UK’s first Cash Lifetime ISA provider with over 130,000 accounts opened to date.

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