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LLOYDS TSB LAUNCHES FIRST HIGH STREET BANK ACCOUNT FOR MUSLIM BUSINESSES

Thousands of Muslim businesses across Britain will be able to bank according to their faith from today, as Lloyds TSB launches the first high street Islamic business account in the country. The account, which complies with Islamic law (Shariah), is available across the bank's 2,000 branches, and will be open to the UK's estimated 100,000 Muslim firms.

The new **Islamic Business and Corporate account**¹ is the latest addition to a range of Islamic banking services for Muslims offered by Lloyds TSB. Last year, following research that showed three quarters of the UK's Muslim population were interested in Islamic financial services, the bank launched a series of Shariah compliant products, including an Islamic current account, student account, mortgage and investment fund.

Islamic law states that businesses, as well as individuals, should not pay or receive interest. The rules also say that individuals and businesses can only invest in certain companies, prohibiting dealings in industries such as gambling or alcohol. In order to ensure that the account is fully compliant with Islamic law, Lloyds TSB has consulted with its board of renowned Islamic scholars*.

Truett Tate, Group Executive Director, Wholesale & International Banking, said: "The entrepreneurial spirit in the UK is truly something to be proud of, and Muslim businesses are making a phenomenal contribution to this through their creativity and incredible work ethic.

"Britain is rapidly establishing itself as a centre of Islamic finance, and Lloyds TSB has been at the forefront of this growth. By introducing an account for businesses, we're consolidating our position as the UK's leading provider of Islamic financial services and making it possible for Britain's Muslim businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs to bank according to their principles."

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Shazia Saleem, 22, a British Muslim entrepreneur who is establishing her own Halal food business, said: “It means a lot to me that I now have the option of banking in line with my faith. Islam is a way of life for me and I know that once I have got my business off the ground it is going to be a huge part of my life, so is important that I am comfortable with every aspect of the way it is run.

“Until now aspiring Muslim entrepreneurs have had limited choices when it comes to financing their business ideas and I know this has held some people back. It’s great that a high street bank is offering an account that meets both my religious and business needs. I am sure this will encourage other Muslims to put their business ideas into action.”

The launch of the Islamic Business and Corporate account establishes Lloyds TSB as the largest provider of Islamic banking across the UK. Customers will be able to make use of the bank’s 2,000 branches and 4,000 Cashpoint machines, as well as Internet and telephone services. They will also have access to a named relationship manager.

In order to comply with Islamic law, the Islamic Business and Corporate account offers no credit interest and no overdraft facility, but does provide all the other services available to traditional business and corporate account holders².

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Notes to editors:

¹ There are two separate accounts on offer. Businesses with a turnover of up to £2 million will be eligible for the Islamic Business Account, while businesses with a higher turnover will be eligible for the Islamic Corporate Account.

² Other benefits of the accounts are:

- Access to a dedicated relationship manager
- Immediate access to funds
- No minimum balance requirement
- A Business Debit Card
- Access to a range of online banking products
- A cheque book and paying in book

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*The Shariah Scholars involved in developing the Lloyds TSB Islamic Business and Corporate account are:

Sheikh Nizam Yaquby

Sheikh Nizam Yaquby is a member of the Shariah Committee for several Islamic financial institutions. He has received an MSc in Finance (Canada) and is based in Bahrain. He has been a Professor of Tafsir, Hadith and Fiqh in Bahrain since 1976 and the author of several articles and publications on Islamic finance in English and Arabic.

Dr Muhammed Imran Ashraf Usmani

Dr. Muhammed Imran Ashraf Usmani holds a PhD in Islamic Finance. He has also obtained degrees in Islamic Jurisprudence from Karachi. Dr. Usmani is a faculty member of the Jamia Darul Uloom, Karachi and Institute of Business Administration (IBA), Karachi as well as the author of various books on Shariah.

Mufti Abdul Kadir Barkatullah

Mufti Abdul Kadir Barkatullah is the Imam at the North London Finchley Mosque. He acquired a Mufti (diploma) in Islamic law and Fazil (Bachelor of Islamic studies) from the Islamic University, India. He also works as a supervisor at the Islamic helpline for Fatwa and as a presenter at Vectone Urdu.

Muhammad Nurullah Shikder

Mufti Muhammed Nurullah Shikder is a Barrister-at-Law and Imam at the Tunbridge Wells Mosque. He received a LLB degree from London Guildhall University. He advises individuals and businesses on Islamic finance.

⁴ Case studies are available for interview on request.

Case Study 1 – Muhammed Z. Yaqoob is vice chairman and managing director of National Halal Food Group. The Group was established by Mr Yaqoob's father, Hafiz Muhammed Yaqoob in 1954, who pioneered the concept of Halal meat in the UK. The company now employs over 50 staff across the south east and midlands and is in the midst of a global expansion.

Case Study 2 – Shazia Saleem (*image available*) is a post graduate student in International law, who is in the process of setting up her own Halal food business, but had been hoping to find a Shariah compliant business account. She currently volunteers as a mentor for underprivileged ethnic minority children in East London.

Customers interested in finding out more about Lloyds TSB's range of Islamic financial services can call the Islamic financial services line on **08456 007 786**. www.lloydstsbbusiness.com

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