

Using Card Machines for Charities & Community Groups



What to think about

WIFI Access – Access to a steady, reliable internet connection will be an important part of being able to utilise your card machine effectively. If you do not have internet access at the place in which you will be using your card machine it may be worth exploring machines that have a sim card installed and operate from a mobile network 4G/5G.

Your accounting records – you will need to consider how the payment will appear on your bank statement. Some card companies will detail information about the payee, whilst others will just provide a payment reference number. This will need to be understood prior to using the card machine so your treasurer/finance officer can recognise how payments can be identified and recorded in your accounts.

Contracts – This is a tricky one to navigate, you don't want to tie yourself into a contract with a card machine provider for too long in case the set up does not work for you but many of the better deals can be made with longer contracts. Discuss a cooling off period with your provider prior to signing a contract, this will enable you to try out the machine and terminate the contract if it is not working for your organization.

Card processing fees/ Transaction Fees/Merchants Service Charge (MSC) – This is the money that will be deducted from each payment you receive via your card machine. It is a key issue to think about as you may want to consider increasing your charges to cover the additional costs incurred by using a card machine.

Card Machines provided with bank accounts – often the simplest solution to access a card machine is to speak to your bank account provider. Some charity/community account providers such as CAF also provide card machines.

Different Types of Card Machine

Card Countertop

As the name suggests, countertop card machines are static models that traditionally sit at a point of sale. They're often seen as the 'traditional' face-to-face card machine option and, because they don't take up much room, they're great if space is tight. By nature, they're best-suited to a fixed premise or single location organisations, where all card payments will be taken in one place.

Portable

In contrast to countertop machines, portable terminals are perfect for organisations with more than one point of sale in a fixed location, or those who want to bring their card machine to the customer, rather than ask them to come to the till to pay. They're particularly useful if you want to accept payments 'on the go'.

Mobile

If you're constantly on the move, mobile card machines are ideal. They allow you to take payment from your customers virtually anywhere without internet connection.

Contactless

All the card machines featured so far have the functionality to take contactless payments. Contactless card machines make it quick and easy for you to take payments of up to £45 using Samsung Pay, Google Pay, Apple Pay (which has no monetary limit) and all major credit and debit cards. This is a great option if you want to reduce queue times.

Virtual terminal

If you only want to accept card payments remotely by phone or via email (also known as MOTO transactions), you'll need a virtual terminal. (If you accept payments face to face as well, you can use your existing terminal to perform this action). As the merchant, you simply enter your customer's card details into the terminal and it'll keep the payment details secure while the bank authorises the transaction. Please note GDPR will apply to this process and you must ensure all details are destroyed once the transaction is complete.

Provider	Transaction Fees	Cost of Device	Additional Info.
Zettle	No monthly fee 1.75% transaction fee	Starting at £19 + VAT	Requires a mobile phone to obtain connection.
Goodbox	No Monthly fee 2.5% + 10p per transaction	Starting at £50 + VAT	
SumUp	No monthly fee 1.69% per transaction	Starting at £29 + VAT	
Liberty Pay			
Square	No monthly fee 1.75% per transaction	Starting at £16+ VAT	
CAF (Worldpay)	No monthly fee 3.6% per transaction		CAF can claim Gift Aid on any donations

***Please note this list is not exhaustive and other card providers may be available for your organisation.**