

Shopping Around?

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- Asking friends and family
- Looking in the newspaper or on the internet
- Visiting banks, building societies or your local credit union
- Asking a financial advisor

Sometimes this might mean enquiring about services and visiting a number of organisations before choosing which one suits you best.

When shopping around some lenders might want to check your credit report before giving you a quote. This is because they link the interest you will pay to the risk of you defaulting on your payments – the higher a credit risk you are, the higher the interest the company will 'offer' you.

1. Before you buy financial products, make sure you have a good idea of what you want.
2. Don't take the first product you see – compare it to other similar offers and check whether you can save money whilst still getting the same deal.
3. If you need to use professional help, make sure that the firm you use is FSA (Financial Services Authority) registered before handing over your money. If they aren't and things go wrong, you won't have access to complaints and compensation procedures – and don't be frightened to ask questions if anything isn't clear.
4. Read all paperwork, especially the information you get about the firm's services and costs. It's probably boring, but it could save you from making a costly mistake. And always make sure you have all the relevant paperwork before you sign a contract.
5. If it sounds too good to be true, it usually is.