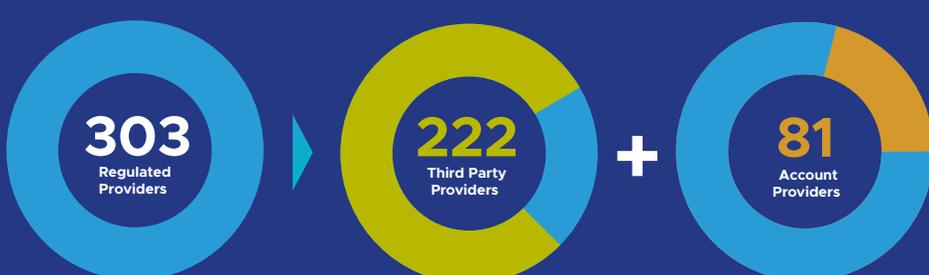


## Ecosystem numbers:



**108** regulated entities with at least one proposition live with customers

## New open banking entities with live customers :

- Landlord Vision Ltd

## New OBIE app store participants

- ANNA
- Finpoint
- ObConnect
- Reflow

## Powered by open banking

### Open banking hits 1 million payments

For the first time in a single calendar month, more than one million open banking payments have been processed. This is especially significant when you consider that around 300k of these types of payments occurred in the whole of 2019, rising to 3.2 million throughout 2020. This milestone indicates that consumer awareness of open banking payments as an alternative way to pay is on the rise and could be a further indicator of the pandemic helping to drive digital adoption. 2021 is being billed as the year of payments, especially with consultations around Variable Recurring Payments and Sweeping, as well as the launch of Confirmation of Payee. We anticipate strong uptake in coming months, not least as a consequence of the Government and HMRC's investment into the open banking ecosystem.

### Accenture report reveals that open banking will aid Digital Identity in a post-Covid era

Accenture have published a digital identity report, which highlights how open banking can aid digital identity in the post-Covid era. Before the pandemic, digital identity had become an integral part of our everyday life. COVID-19 has accelerated the need for businesses and governments worldwide to rethink their approach to enabling remote-identity verification over digital channels to facilitate day-to-day interactions. With the current open banking infrastructure, financial service firms are in a unique position to drive this trend and serve the increasing demand for digital identity.

### HMRC awards open banking contract to Ecospend

HMRC awarded a £3 million open banking contract to FinTech start-up Ecospend, to make it easy for taxpayers to submit payments direct from their bank accounts rather than through debit or credit card. This welcome development lays the groundwork for a substantial boost to open banking services in the UK. The contract was awarded following a formal procurement and tender exercise, which began in November of last year.

### Equifax Acquires AccountScore

Equifax has acquired transaction data analytics company, AccountScore, to improve its open banking and insights capabilities. As well as allowing automated, digital income verification, the acquisition will enable Equifax to carry out more granular assessments of affordability and expenditure together with predictive and inclusive credit scoring.

### UK's open banking model provides lessons to help ensure Hong Kong's ecosystem can reach its full potential

Hong Kong is beginning its open banking journey and is looking to draw on successes seen in the UK. The two markets share a number of similarities, including a mature banking industry and a landscape where a relatively small number of banks account for most of the market share, making the possibilities for open banking more exciting.

### Open banking can transform payments scene in Saudi Arabia

With open banking going into effect next year in Saudi Arabia, traditional banks must rethink their business models to remain relevant and competitive. Open banking can help to mandate banks to expose their systems, such as for payment initiation, and data, such as account information, to third parties with the necessary customer consent, this allows those third parties to build products and services for the financial institution's customers. These lower barriers to entry for start-ups could result in increased competition and innovation across Saudi Arabia.

### South Korea launches Virtual Sandbox for fintech development

The South Korean Financial Services Commission announced plans to launch a digital sandbox to test new FinTech products and services under development. The use of a digital sandbox will allow FinTech service providers to trial their new products on the market, while consumers can find new services. The country's open banking system was launched in December 2019 and allows FinTech firms to access banks' payment network and pay lower transaction fees through several open API initiatives.

## Key Highlights

### The Kalifa Review is published

*"We pioneered open banking, which has taken the world by storm" – John Glen, foreword to the Kalifa Review*

Last week The Kalifa Review set out to advance three core objectives: ensuring UK FinTech has the resources to grow and succeed; create the conditions for the continued widespread adoption of FinTech solutions; and maintain and advance the UK's global reputation for innovation and transformation. The review also highlighted the need for the creation of a new Digital Economy Taskforce framework to deliver the FinTech strategy, the development and implementation of a data strategy, which includes developing a Digital ID framework and prioritising Smart Data and to continue to progress Open Finance as a mandatory regime and in alignment with other Smart Data initiatives.

### The OBIE launches first Annual Report to showcase significant open banking progress

To clearly outline the significant work that has taken place over the past three years developing the open banking infrastructure, ecosystem, and functionality, the OBIE has published its first annual report. With open banking implementation in its final stage, it has been important to consolidate the progress to date in the report and to highlight the work of the OBIE in pushing open banking towards mainstream adoption.

### The OBIE launches free online tool to fight fraud

The OBIE has launched a new online tool to help firms prevent and fight fraud. The Counter-Fraud Maturity Self-Assessment tool has been collaboratively developed by the OBIE's Security & Fraud Working Group, Accenture, Cifas, the University of Portsmouth Centre for Counter Fraud Studies and the Cabinet Office Fraud, Error and Debt Team. The tool, freely available to all firms enrolled in the OBIE Directory, allows open banking companies to assess the maturity of their fraud defences and seeks to further strengthen the resilience of the open banking ecosystem.

### IASME and the OBIE team up to launch Counter-Fraud Fundamentals certification scheme

IASME has worked with the OBIE to create a Counter-Fraud Fundamentals certification scheme, as part of their suite of certifications in cyber security, risk management and governance. The scheme is aimed at financial services, from banks and FinTechs, to related sectors such as retail and insurance. It aims to drive education and implementation of the most important counter-fraud controls that companies in these sectors should have in place, as well as increase customer confidence and trust by demonstrating a firm's commitment to improve.