

what we've seen

→ how we've helped

data in more depth

www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk

In some cases, we decide the consumer involved has been left out of pocket as a result of a business's error. In around five in ten cases we upheld this year, we told the businesses to do something that didn't have an immediate cash value – for example, amending a credit file or apologising. And in one in six cases, we told businesses to pay compensation to recognise the non-financial impact of their actions – for example, the inconvenience or upset they'd caused.

working flexibly

The prospect of bureaucracy can be a significant barrier to people getting the help they need to resolve a problem. To ensure it's as straightforward as possible to access our service, this year we continued to focus on working increasingly flexibly.

And following changes to the FCA's rules in July 2015, many businesses have agreed we can step in to look at complaints they haven't yet responded to themselves.

Together, these developments mean we can help more people at an early stage. In 2016/2017, we resolved complaints more quickly than at any time since we were set up in 2001 – in many cases giving our answer in a matter of days, and sometimes hours. This pace has clear benefits in all sorts of circumstances: whether someone's confused about insurance auto-renewal, has a problem paying their bills, or is faced with losing their home.

We chat on TalkRadio about consumer rights when shopping online



We get the highest weekly number of enquiries about consumer credit



We share our experience of helping people facing financial difficulties at the East London Financial Capability Forum

83%

of complaints were resolved within three months, excluding PPI

96%

of complaints were resolved within six months

for more information see *data in more depth* (table 22) p.60



open conversations help avoid repossession

Miss G contacted us after receiving a "letter of action" from a mortgage administration company, saying they were taking steps to repossess her home. Her husband was terminally ill. Although she'd had an initial conversation with a debt advice charity, she was finding the situation overwhelming and wanted more help.

Miss G hadn't made a formal complaint, but when we spoke to the mortgage administration company they agreed we could get involved straight away. We arranged a three-way phone call so everyone could talk openly about the situation and possible options.

The company explained Miss G had been overpaying in some months and underpaying in others. However, they accepted it was clear she'd been doing her best to keep up with what she owed. They said they'd withdraw their letter of action, capitalise the arrears, clear the interest and charges and extend the mortgage term by six months.

Miss G agreed to set up a direct debit to make sure her payments arrived on time – and, with the help of the debt advice charity, to keep in touch with a named account manager at the mortgage administration company.