



**Financial  
Ombudsman  
Service**

# Our 2025/26 Plans and Budget



**Financial  
Ombudsman  
Service**

for small businesses



**Claims  
Management  
Ombudsman**

a Financial Ombudsman service

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# The Financial Ombudsman Service

## About us

We were set up by Parliament under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 (FSMA) to resolve complaints between financial businesses and eligible complainants, fairly and reasonably, quickly, and with minimal formality.

Eligible complainants include consumers, but we can also look at complaints made by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) about financial businesses, and complaints made by customers of claims management companies (CMCs). More information about our jurisdiction, including limits on the awards we can make, can be found in the [how we make decisions](#) section of our website.

In addition to resolving disputes, we share our insights to improve outcomes for all customers of financial services products.

## Chief Executive Officer and Chief Ombudsman's introduction

As interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and interim Chief Ombudsman (CO), we are pleased to introduce our Plans and Budget for the financial year 2025/26 and would like to thank everyone who responded to our consultation.

We are committed to ensuring we have a modern redress framework in which to operate so we can provide the best service to consumers, small businesses and financial services firms.

Providing a quick and informal independent alternative to the courts to resolve complaints plays a crucial role in maintaining consumer confidence in UK financial services and supporting the UK economy.

## A plan to deliver for our customers

We start 2025/26 by continuing to address the exceptional demand we have experienced over the last year and facing ongoing uncertainty around motor finance complaints. We never forget that behind each case are customers waiting for an answer. Our Plans and Budget for 2025/26, set out in this document, put the reduction in these cases front and centre.

While half of the 189,700 complaints waiting for a resolution are impacted by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) pause on motor finance complaints, the remainder of the backlog has built up due to exceptional short-term demand in our consumer credit and fraud and scams areas.

Our Plans and Budget for 2025/26 aim to bring down the number of non-car commission cases waiting for a resolution – despite the increasing complexity in some types of complaints, such as fraud and scams. This will improve the time it takes for customers to receive an answer on their case and their experience of our service. We plan to continue to work motor finance commission (MFC) cases as far as we can, and within the parameters of the ongoing legal and regulatory action outside our control.

The operational improvements we have delivered over the last year have gone some way to helping us manage incoming demand and we are seeing the overall productivity of our people increasing. But these improvements have not kept pace with the volume of cases we have received, and this has impacted the time it takes us to give customers answers on cases.

We are continuing to drive forward our plans to transform and improve our service. We are focusing on reducing the time it takes to get customers answers on cases by further increasing our capacity to resolve cases productively; building flexibility in our workforce to respond

to reasonable changes in demand; and sharing greater insight with industry. Together, these actions will deliver a better journey for our customers overall.

At the start of 2025/26, we will implement changes to our funding model, which see professional representatives charged a case fee for using our service. This change aims to make our funding arrangements fairer and to encourage professional representatives to submit better-evidenced complaints.

## A changing environment

The financial services landscape has changed significantly since the creation of our service in 2001. The Financial Ombudsman Service was set up to resolve individual complaints, not to handle mass claims. As we have seen from the backlog built up in 2024/25, the handling of mass claims impacts our ability to resolve cases quickly and informally.

So, we will seek further opportunities to improve our service and the system in which we operate. A further focus for us this year will be to engage with the Economic Secretary to the Treasury's (EST) review of our organisation and the feedback we have received, as part of our joint Call for Input with the FCA on whether and how we play a role in resolving mass redress events in future. We will work with the FCA and His Majesty's Treasury (HMT) to enhance the service we offer and ensure our organisation is set up for success in the future, in line with its original purpose as a quick and informal alternative to the courts.

Despite the challenge of increased caseloads and uncertainty around MFC, we are pleased to take forward the proposals set out in our consultation to keep levies and our case fees flat, saving respondent firms around £70m in 2025/26 compared to pricing in 2023/24.

The last few months have brought changes to the leadership of the Financial Ombudsman Service. In February, it was announced that Abby Thomas had stepped down as Chief Executive and Chief Ombudsman and that Baroness Manzoor will be stepping down from her role as Chair of our Non-Executive Board in August, at the end of her second term.

The changes in leadership do not change our commitment to our core purpose – resolving financial complaints for customers in a timely manner.

The FCA pause on motor finance commission cases and the ongoing work to improve the future of the financial services redress landscape, provides us with an uncertain operational environment. By building a flexible workforce, engaging with stakeholders and targeting opportunities to improve our processes, we are setting ourselves up to best respond to this challenge and to deliver for our customers.

We look forward to leading the Financial Ombudsman Service at this critical time.



**Jenny Simmonds**  
Interim Chief  
Executive Officer

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Simmonds'.



**James Dipple-Johnstone**  
Interim Chief Ombudsman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Dipple-Johnstone'.

# Our 2025/26 Plans and Budget: overview

## Our Plans

We anticipate receiving approximately  
**209,000 complaints**

We anticipate resolving approximately  
**270,000 complaints**

which will be 45,000 more than 2024/25  
– a 20% increase year on year

## We will

carry forward a stock of around 190,000 complaints from 2024/25 into 2025/26

exit 2025/26 with a stock of around 129,000 complaints, of which 101,000 will be about motor finance commission

reduce the time it takes to give customers answers on cases

continue to build our data capability and share more high-quality insight

build flexibility into our workforce to enable us to respond effectively to uncertain demand

## Our Budget

Our Compulsory Jurisdiction (CJ) levy will reduce to

**£70m**

(2024/25: £72m)

Our Voluntary Jurisdiction (VJ) levy will remain at

**£0.6m**

(2024/25: £0.6m)

Our case fee for respondent businesses, outside the group-account fee arrangement, will remain at

**£650**

(2024/25: £650), reducing to £475 for cases that are professionally represented and are closed with no change in outcome for the complainant

Professional representatives will have

**10 free cases**

and then be charged a fee of £250 on referral of a case, reducing to £75 if the case is closed with a change in outcome in the complainant's favour

Respondent businesses will have

**3 free cases**

except for our group-account fee arrangement businesses who will not have any free cases.

Firms that are part of the group-fee arrangement will have a tolerance/margin of

**+/- 5%**

Our expected operating expenditure will be

**£278m**

(2024/25: £236m) reflecting the increased volume of complaints to resolve

# Our purpose, priorities and values

Our purpose and priorities shape and focus our work. Our values are the foundation of our strategy and guide how we work.

## Our purpose

Our purpose is clear. We were set up by Parliament to resolve complaints between financial businesses and their customers. We do this quickly and informally and on a fair and reasonable basis.

## Our strategy

We believe that every customer who engages with us – both consumers and financial businesses – should have a better outcome or feel better informed following our involvement.

We want all our customers to feel that their case has been fairly considered and to understand how we have reached a decision.

As well as resolving cases for our customers, our role is to:

- help consumers better understand the issue that caused their complaint
- share data and insight with financial businesses about what happened to cause a complaint, to help them provide better products and services.

## Strategic aims

Our plans are focused on delivering our strategy, brought to life through our strategic aims.

<b>Improved financial services</b>	<b>Accessible and easy to use</b>
Improving <b>trust and confidence in financial services</b> by providing businesses with clear insight and empowering consumers with the knowledge to make informed decisions	Providing a <b>straightforward and accessible</b> service, enabling all customers to easily raise complaints
<b>Value for money</b>	<b>Professional expertise</b>
Delivering <b>greater value for money</b> by providing efficient, high-quality services at a fair and transparent cost	Being recognised for the <b>quality of our casework</b> and the <b>professionalism of our colleagues</b>

## Our values

Our values underpin our strategy. They help define our culture and influence our operational decisions. They set out how we all play our PART, through Purpose, Ambition, Respect and Trust.

## New complaints we expect to receive in 2025/26

We work with the financial services industry, as well as the FCA – including through our Plans and Budget consultation – to best understand likely incoming demand for our service. However, there will always be levels of uncertainty. Nevertheless, during 2024/25 the level of uncertainty has been higher than usual, driven by the ongoing legal and regulatory action in respect of motor finance commission and the response to our introduction of a fee for some professional representatives.

In our 2024/25 latest forecast, around 175,300 complaints (so 53%) of the 330,000 total complaints are expected to have come to our service through a professional representative. In our 2025/26 budget this reduces to around 59,100 complaints (so 28%) of the total 209,000 total complaints.

The introduction of charging, for cases from professional representatives from 1 April 2025, aims to ensure that our funding arrangements are fairer and to encourage professional representatives to submit better-evidenced complaints. We have also introduced improvements to our ‘front door’ to help them better validate, prepare, and identify cases that are ready for us. This will minimise unnecessary referrals (and hence fees).

The uncertainty around the number of complaints we would receive from professional representatives continued all the way through to the end of 2024/25. The final number of complaints received could be plus or minus around 20,000 complaints. We have built, and continue to build, more resilience so that we can respond to uncertain demand to within reasonable levels. We will keep the arrangements under regular review as we work with all stakeholders to evaluate their impact.

Complaint type	2024/25 latest forecast	2025/26 consultation budget	2025/26 final budget	Trends we are monitoring and expecting to see in 2025/26
MFC – DCA	20,000	19,000	1,200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We expect to continue to receive a small number of motor finance commission discretionary commission arrangement (DCA) cases, despite the FCA pause.</li> </ul>
MFC – non-DCA	65,600	22,400	14,300	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a result of the FCA pause announced in December, we now expect non-DCA complaint levels to be low during the first part of the year, with volumes increasing in Q4 2025/26, post-pause.</li> </ul>
Credit cards	66,400	33,400	32,600	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are expecting a reduction from 2024/25 levels in irresponsible and unaffordable lending complaints because we expect to receive fewer cases without merit from professional representatives.</li> </ul>
Fraud and scams	33,700	38,400	35,900	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are expecting disputed transaction cases to remain high, given the increasing volume and sophistication of fraud and scams.</li> </ul>
Other banking and consumer credit	82,000	70,700	68,600	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are expecting a reduction from 2024/25 levels in other consumer credit products and services and unsecured loans as we expect to receive fewer cases without merit from professional representatives.</li> <li>We are closely monitoring the impact of the Payment Systems Regulator (PSR) Authorised Push Payment regulation from October 2024. 2024/25 volumes have been low, but we are anticipating an increase in 2025/26.</li> <li>We expect complaints about mortgages to remain broadly stable.</li> </ul>
<b>Total banking and consumer credit</b>	<b>267,700</b>	<b>183,900</b>	<b>152,600</b>	
Insurance	45,600	43,900	45,600	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We expect complaints about insurance to remain relatively stable.</li> <li>We expect complaints about motor insurance to remain high due to the higher cost of, and supply challenges around, parts and labour.</li> </ul>
Investment and pensions	16,200	11,700	10,300	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have accounted for a year-on-year decrease of around 6,000 cases. We don't expect the rise in complaints about incremental ongoing advice charges (which we saw in 2024/25) to be repeated in 2025/26.</li> <li>Other than this, we expect complaints about investments and pensions to remain relatively stable.</li> </ul>
Other (including complaints originating from CMCs and against funeral plan providers)	500	500	500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We expect volumes in other areas to remain stable and low overall.</li> </ul>
<b>Total</b>	<b>330,000</b>	<b>240,000</b>	<b>209,000</b>	



Complaint type	2024/25 latest forecast	2025/26 consultation budget	2025/26 final budget	Trends we are monitoring and expecting to see in 2025/26
<b>Of these totals:</b>				
Complaints from SMEs	1,100	1,000	1,100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We expect volumes of complaints from SMEs to be broadly stable. We do not expect charging professional representatives to affect demand in this area.</li> </ul>
Complaints about voluntary jurisdiction (VJ) participants	12,000	13,000	12,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We are expecting complaints about motor insurance against VJ participants to remain high, due to supply challenges around, and higher costs of, parts and labour.</li> </ul>
Professionally represented cases received	175,300	86,000	59,100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Latest forecasts for 2024/25 and 2025/26 reflect the significantly increased number of cases brought by professional representatives. We expect this to reduce in 2025/26 due to the impact of charging professional representatives from 1 April 2025.</li> </ul>

## External regulatory factors which may impact demands

As part of the wider regulatory ecosystem, we work with the FCA and other organisations on issues of shared interest, including through the Wider Implications Framework. Regulatory, social and other factors may affect demand for our service. Looking to 2025/26 this includes the areas of motor finance commission and deferred payment (Buy Now Pay Later).

### Motor finance commission

On 19 December 2024, the FCA extended the time firms have to respond to complaints about motor finance agreements that do not involve a discretionary commission arrangement (non-DCA). This is in line with the existing extension for firms on DCA cases and followed Court of Appeal consideration of three claims brought by consumers about non-DCA sales.

Most of our motor finance commission complaints can be categorised as either DCA or non-DCA complaints. These accounted for half of our overall complaint stock at the end of March 2025 (96,000 out of 190,000). We have assumed we cannot resolve most motor finance commission complaints before December 2025, due to ongoing regulatory action and litigation.

On 11 March 2025 the FCA announced that they are likely to consult on the introduction of a redress scheme once the Supreme Court's decision has been handed down.

Despite the FCA's pause and recent announcement on a possible redress scheme, we are continuing to receive and accept cases which:

- either pre-date the pause, or
- where firms have not responded within eight weeks or have responded with a final response letter granting referral rights

These cases cannot be resolved at this time. However, given it is not yet clear what a redress scheme may look like, what types of cases it would apply to or whether the court may amend the approach we need to take to these issues, we will continue to work these complaints as far as we can, while balancing other resource needs across our casework.

This means we will identify and resolve complaints where no commission is involved or which are not within our jurisdiction, and – on those where commission is paid – we will collect information on the complaint to produce a factual summary that sets out key information to form the basis of any future merits assessment. This approach will also ensure we have people trained in motor finance commission should we need to resolve some or all of these cases in due course.

We will continue to assess the best way to manage motor finance commission complaints, taking into account new information, such as the outcome of litigation and any redress scheme the regulator may design, as it becomes available.

### Deferred payment credit (previously referred to as Buy Now Pay Later)

In October 2024, the Government published a consultation setting out its plans for regulating the deferred payment market, which includes providing access to our service for consumers of these products.

Once the legislation is finalised, the FCA will consult in 2025/26 on proposed regulatory rules and their approach to authorising firms. The FCA has said that firms will then have a period to prepare for the new rules before they come into effect. It is expected that the FCA will take on regulation of the sector 12 months after legislation is passed, after which we anticipate that we will start to receive complaints.

Based on this timeline, we do not anticipate receiving complaints about newly regulated deferred payment credit products in 2025/26. So, we have not made provision for complaints about these products in our Budget for 2025/26. Work will take place over the year to better understand how the final scope of the rules may impact demand for our service.

## Complaints we expect to resolve in 2025/26

Complaint type	2024/25 latest forecast	2025/26 consultation budget	2025/26 final budget
MFC – DCA	–	5,000	5,000
MFC – non-DCA	6,300	5,000	5,000
Credit cards	58,400	66,100	56,000
Fraud and scams	27,000	40,000	43,000
Other banking and credit	75,000	90,600	90,500
<b>Banking and consumer credit</b>	<b>166,700</b>	<b>206,700</b>	<b>199,500</b>
Insurance	42,800	49,600	56,000
Investment and pensions	15,000	13,200	14,000
Other (including complaints originating from CMCs and about funeral plans)	500	500	500
<b>Total</b>	<b>225,000</b>	<b>270,000</b>	<b>270,000</b>
Of these totals:			
SMEs	1,300	1,500	1,500
VJ participants	12,000	13,000	12,000
Professional represented cases	77,500	89,100	90,000

We expect to end 2024/25 with 189,700 cases waiting for a resolution, of which 96,000 relate to motor finance commission.

We are planning to resolve **45,000 more** complaints this year than in 2024/25 – a 20% increase year on year. We will deliver this through a combination of improved efficiency and additional resources. This will bring down closing stock for cases that can be progressed to 27,200 by the end of 2025/26.

Overall, at the end of 2025/26, we anticipate having 128,700 cases waiting for a resolution, of which 101,500 will be motor finance commission cases. We do not expect to be able to start progressing MFC cases until late in 2025/26, due to the impact of the FCA’s review of the historic use of motor finance discretionary commission arrangements and ongoing legal action. This will result in an increase in MFC stock.

<b>Movement in stock</b>	<b>2024/25 latest forecast</b>	<b>2025/26 consultation budget</b>	<b>2025/26 final budget</b>
<b>Opening stock</b>	<b>80,903</b>	<b>150,400</b>	<b>189,700</b>
Incoming demand	330,000	240,000	209,000
Resolved cases	225,000	270,000	270,000
Other movements	3,797	-	-
<b>Closing stock</b>	<b>189,700</b>	<b>120,400</b>	<b>128,700</b>
Cases that can be progressed	93,700	29,600	27,200
Cases that cannot be progressed	96,000	90,800	101,500
<b>Average investigator FTE</b>	<b>1,507</b>	<b>1,812</b>	<b>1,737</b>

## Responding to uncertain demand

We work with the financial services industry, as well as the FCA – including through our Plans and Budget consultation – to best understand likely incoming demand for our service. However, there will always be levels of uncertainty, so we continue to focus on how we set ourselves up to respond as efficiently as possible to changes in demand.

We will continue to focus on adding capacity and enhancing flexibility in our case handling workforce. It is important to ensure that we have access to resource capacity and the casework skills needed to best respond to the demand for our service, despite the uncertainty on what this might be.

Our case handling workforce is currently split between permanent and contingent case handlers. We are in the process of retendering our contingent supplier contract, building on the success of the previous partnership. Having access to a contingent workforce gives us more flexibility to scale up and down within reasonable timeframes. As of March 2025, we are forecasting that 34% of our case handlers will be part of our contingent workforce, rising to 38% by March 2026. In addition, our presence in hubs across the UK, increases our access to recruitment markets.

Our learning and development Academy, enhanced in 2024/25 for our permanent case handler recruitment, ensures our people have the core skills they need to effectively review and resolve complaints fairly and consistently, and provides targeted retraining

when we need our people to focus on different product areas. Building on this, we will be extending the Academy to train contingent workers from 1 April 2025.

We continue to harness process improvements and technology to reduce the level of unnecessary administration activity in our case management process. For example, we have reduced the time existing casework staff spend on recruitment and initial training by appointing dedicated professionals to do this instead. This frees up our people to focus on ensuring that newly recruited case handlers are appropriately supported when they join their casework team and to resolve complaints.

Whilst we increased the average investigator FTE by 69 during 2024/25 (in addition to the backfill of attrition), which was consistent with our budget, this was not sufficient to deal with the larger influx of cases than expected. For 2025/26, we have recruitment plans (including the backfill of attrition) to provide an additional 230 average investigator FTE. This will be across both our permanent and contingent workforce as appropriate. This increased resource will ensure we are appropriately set up to reduce our non-MFC open case volume in an operationally efficient manner but also be ready to respond to the outcome (to within a reasonable tolerance level) of the regulatory and legal reviews on motor finance commission cases.

# Our service standards

Our service standards are the measures we put in place to ensure we remain focused on improving the customer experience. The measures are designed to provide a comprehensive view of our performance across different factors.

## Tracking performance excluding motor finance commission cases

Given we are not currently able to resolve most motor finance commission cases, for 2025/26 we will track our performance against our caseload excluding motor finance commission cases (our business-as-usual work).

By tracking our performance on cases excluding motor finance commission cases, we are better able to monitor and evaluate the underlying, core service offered to customers. We will monitor progression of motor finance commission cases against separate appropriate metrics.

## The impact on 2025/26 service standards of the high level of opening BAU cases

The significantly higher volume of incoming complaints than budgeted for in 2024/25 (330,000 new cases compared to 210,000 set out in budget) not only impacted our ability to achieve our desired timeliness service standards in 2024/25 but also means that we have a significant volume of non-motor finance commission cases (93,700) at the start of 2025/26 which require resolving.

We are committed to improving the time it takes to resolve the complaints we receive but acknowledge that getting through all the cases we have in stock will impact our timeliness, which will be lower than we would like until later in 2025/26. Our case allocation tools and process supports working the cases in order of receipt, though the progression from that point depends on the timely provision of the information required and the nature of the complaint.

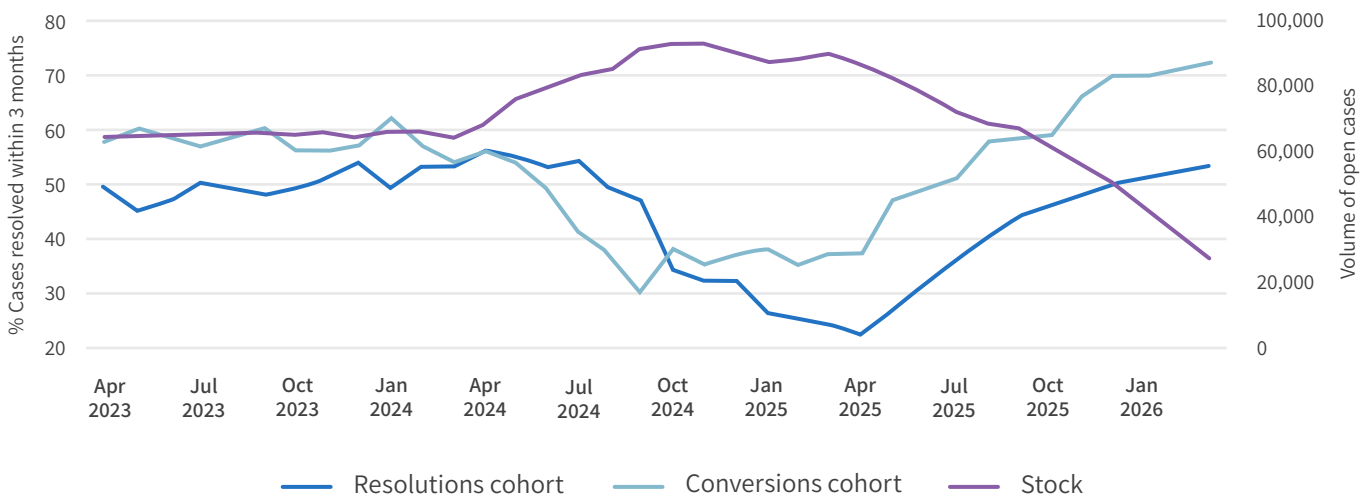
Given the high level of cases in opening stock, we are targeting and monitoring timeliness through two lenses to ensure we are being sufficiently transparent on the experience for our customers.

For 2025/26, the primary timeliness measure (the “resolution cohort”) will be one that tracks how long it took for cases **closed** in the reporting period to have been resolved. This therefore includes the customer experience for those who had open cases with us at the start of the year, as well as for those with complaints newly raised in the period.

The secondary metric (the “conversion cohort”) – used in 2023/24 and 2024/25 reporting – tracks how long it took for cases **received** in the reporting period to be resolved. This is therefore focused only on customers with complaints newly raised in the period.

The chart below illustrates the impact on the 3-month timeliness measure relative to the volume of complaints received into stock.

**Timeliness (% cases resolved in 3 months) – non motor-finance cases**



## 2025/26 service standards targets

The table below sets out the service standards in the final budget for 2025/26. These targets align to the resource plan, and the budget, included in this document, and factor in a phased reduction of open cases during 2025/26.

The service standard targets included in the 2025/26 consultation budget are a stretch to achieve given the further subsequent uplift to incoming demand for 2024/25 and opening stock for 2025/26.

Nevertheless, we are identifying further initiatives to those already planned to improve service standards. These will likely intersect with work being progressed following the initial Call for Input feedback.

Other than the timeliness metrics, all other service standards for all cases (excluding MFC) have slightly increased compared to the 2024/25 latest forecast. Measures such as “Net Easy” are directly impacted by the time it takes for us to resolve a complaint, therefore the final budget target is reflective of this.

Key service standard measures: all cases excluding MFC cases	2023/24 actuals	2024/25 latest forecast	2025/26 consultation budget	2025/26 final budget
Primary (resolution cohort): % complaints resolved within <b>3 months</b> of conversion	50%	40%	n/a	<b>40%</b>
Secondary (conversion cohort): % complaints resolved within <b>3 months</b> of conversion	58%	40%	70%	<b>60%</b>
Primary (resolution cohort): % complaints resolved within <b>6 months</b> of conversion	79%	82%	n/a	<b>74%</b>
Secondary (conversion cohort): % complaints resolved within <b>6 months</b> of conversion	84%	82%	90%	<b>85%</b>
% complaints within stock > 12 months old	16%	6%	<1%	<b>5%</b>
% investigation quality overall score	94%	94%	90%	<b>90%</b>
Consumer Net Easy score	48	43	50	<b>45</b>
Consumer confidence score	57%	58%	60%	<b>60%</b>

## Sharing data and insight

Our strategy of “better outcome or better informed” highlights how, by sharing what we see, we play a vital role in helping improve financial services for all.

Our data is an important source of information which helps:

- firms to better understand why complaints occur so they can resolve complaints earlier, or stop them occurring in the future by improving their products and services
- consumers to make informed decisions about products and services, and understand what to expect from a business that is resolving their financial complaint
- our stakeholders to make well-considered decisions and focus their attention on key issues
- us to better understand our customers and make data-led decisions on service improvements

We know our stakeholders value the data we provide and are keen for us to share more, in greater detail.

As set out in our [Plans and Budget for 2024/25](#), we want to share more insights from our data in a way that works for our stakeholders. To do this, we need to improve the foundations of our data collection, storage and sharing capabilities. We started this work in 2024/25 and this will continue to be a key focus for us in 2025/26.

As well as improving the foundations of our data collection and storage, we have started the managed rollout of our new business portal – Business Connect. This gives financial services businesses a full view of the cases they have with our service, the ability to manage and interact with those cases digitally, and improved visibility of key data on those cases. Businesses involved in the pilot and initial stages of managed rollout have provided positive feedback, including on how it supports them to manage their workloads and make informed decisions on individual cases. Business Connect will be available to all respondent businesses by December 2025. Find out more about our transformation portfolio on page 17.

We are also committed to sharing timely and more accessible insight during the year. This includes:

- continuing to evolve our regular data publications and sharing timely topic and product insight through our digital channels, media releases, and our direct engagement with stakeholders and customers
- building a refreshed digital knowledge base on our website, bringing together existing guidance and insight in one easy-to-use format
- adding further search filters to our decisions database, once underlying data storage changes have been completed

## Effective engagement

We know financial businesses value direct contact with us. Following a change to our operating model in 2023/24, financial businesses who regularly engage with our service now have direct contact with a senior leader in our casework teams. This allows more focused engagement, better insight sharing and quicker responses to issues identified in the cases we are seeing.

We run half-yearly round tables and/or steering groups with key stakeholders, which helps us understand what issues may be on the horizon, while also providing a forum to share our approach to key issues. Financial businesses, consumer groups and representatives are also able to contact us through our [Business Support Hub](#). We believe that offering this direct engagement results in the quicker resolution of cases for consumers.

We continue to build on our programme of work to hear directly from our customers about their interactions with our service, to help shape our process and customer journey. This includes regular consumer surveys and focus groups. We also engage with consumer groups directly and through our relevant working and steering groups.

As part of the financial services' regulatory family, we will continue to work closely with the FCA and FSCS, as well as other key stakeholders, both formally and informally. Recent changes to the [Wider Implications Framework](#) seek to provide more direct channels of communication between industry and consumer representatives, and members of the framework.

## Changes to the financial services landscape and our service

Our joint Call for Input with the FCA to modernise the financial services redress system closed in January 2025. This Call for Input focused on the issue of mass redress events, including the role of the Ombudsman service in the resolution of these wide-reaching issues.

We heard from over 140 stakeholders, with a range of useful and insightful suggestions to improve the overall financial services redress landscape. Alongside the FCA, we are working through the responses and shaping proposals for joint response in the Summer, as well as looking at any opportunities which could be taken forward sooner.

On 17 March the Economic Secretary to the Treasury (EST) announced a review of our service, building on the Call for Input work, focused on ensuring we can effectively deliver our quick and informal remit into the future and committing to consider legislation changes if needed to address feedback from the Call for Input. This will run alongside the joint Call for Input timeline. We are working closely with HMT on this review.

We anticipate the EST review and Call for Input consultation to have an impact on our 2025/26 plans, but the detail of this has not yet been developed and so is not able to be included. We will reflect any changes in future forecasts as appropriate.



# Improving our service

Our service should be quick, informal and easy for all our customers to use. People and businesses should feel as though, having used our service, they either have a better outcome on their case or are better informed.

Delivering this service means we need to keep evolving. Our transformation initiatives in 2025/26 build on our progress to date and are aligned to

the delivery of our strategy and our key purpose. These initiatives target opportunities across the entire customer journey focusing on ways to improve timeliness, operational efficiency and the overall customer experience. We know from customers that the time it takes for their case to be resolved has a real impact on their lives and/or business and is a key driver for satisfaction with our overall service.

## Our customer journey

The image below shows our customer journey and sets out what customers can expect.



## The vision for our customer journey

<p><b>Consumers will...</b></p> <p>know about us when they need us, have easy access to clear information about our service and how we might be able to help.</p> <p>Where we can help, they are guided through the complaint making process and can easily provide the information we need up front. They will be provided with clear information about what to expect and when – and will have a dedicated point of contact. They will be able to track the progress of their case on the portal.</p> <p>When we reach an answer on their case, they will understand the reasoning. They will have the chance to provide feedback on our service at key stages.</p>	<p><b>Respondent businesses will...</b></p> <p>have access to clear information about our approach to common cases – and be able to engage with our Business Support Hub ahead of a complaint coming to us, to help them resolve cases themselves.</p> <p>Where a case is referred to us, businesses will be able to action tasks and track the progress of cases through our business portal. When we reach an answer on a case, they will understand the reasoning. They will have the chance to provide feedback on our service at key stages.</p> <p>We will share insights and learnings from the cases we see on our website and through engagement, to help improve financial services overall. Our case-fee billing process will be clear and easy to engage with.</p>
<p><b>Professional representatives will...</b></p> <p>have a clear understanding of our process, the cases we can help with and the information we need to accept a case. They will be able to review our approach to similar cases to help advise their clients and help resolve cases early on.</p> <p>Our case-fee billing process will be clear and easy to engage with.</p>	<p><b>Our people will...</b></p> <p>be supported with productivity tools and targeted automation, enabling them to focus on the resolution of cases for customers. They will have easy access to clear knowledge content which helps them reach fair and consistent answers on cases, including through decision frameworks.</p>

## Delivering our customer journey vision

We are on the journey to deliver this service for our customers. We have already introduced tools to help our case handlers' complete activities more quickly or automate activities entirely, improved our online complaint form for consumers and introduced a new form for professional representatives. We have launched Business Connect – our business portal – and will roll this out further in 2025/26. We now also offer more data about the complaints we receive on our website.

The success of our change programme will be measured through our service standards, in particular the reduction in the time it takes for us to resolve cases whilst maintaining high quality. There are underlying improvements being achieved despite some service standards being currently adversely impacted by the recent high influx of complaints received.

For most of the enquiries and complaints we handle, the time it takes to resolve a case is driven by two main factors: our own activity and the activity required by others. Our change initiatives can be viewed through the lens of these two focus areas.

### Our own activity in resolving a complaint

By improving our processes and ways of working we will increase our capacity for case resolution.

- We will automate a number of administrative processes, including requesting and chasing business files, tagging documents in files and providing customers with standard updates. Our business and consumer portals will allow customers to see the status of their case and keep track of progress proactively.
- To further enhance case consistency, reinforce quality and reduce decision-making time, we are developing decision frameworks for common products. These frameworks distil casework guidance into a structured format, ensuring key factors are consistently considered, supporting decision-making without replacing case handler judgement.

- We continue our roll out of our Activity Based Management tooling to all case handlers to help our people focus on the activities which add the most value in the resolution of a case and to identify process improvements.

### Activity required by others in resolving a complaint

Enhancements to our overall customer journey will reduce the friction for all our customers – and improve the overall timeline of a complaint.

- We will ensure that consumers, professional representatives and respondent businesses are encouraged to share all the information we need to consider a complaint from the start. This will reduce the time spent chasing information and speed up the resolution of cases.
- Businesses and consumers using our portals will be able to carry out tasks directly in the portal, including sending information, replying to messages and accepting a decision.
- We will share more information about our approach and expectations, including through the sharing of key elements of our decision frameworks for common products. This will enhance transparency and clarity in decision-making processes and means all our customers will have a clearer understanding of how we consider cases, to help resolve cases early on. This will also ensure that financial businesses' internal complaint handling procedures reflect the principles of fairness and good customer outcomes, strengthening consumer confidence in financial services.

Additionally, to further support improving our service we are also progressing:

- The enhancement of our data capture and storage capability, which is necessary for improved insight sharing, as well as being foundational for other initiatives.

- A review and then implementation of updates to our billing system, to support more flexible future funding models.
- A review of each stage of our complaint handling process, to ensure we are operating in the most effective and efficient way.
- A review of the level of interest currently applied to the redress we award on upheld cases to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

## **Responding to changing circumstances**

Our transformation portfolio has been reviewed to cross-check that initiatives planned are not incongruent with the feedback received on the recent Call for Input. Nevertheless, we expect that the further reviews and plans to modernise the redress framework will result in additional opportunities to improve our service, as will new areas of work like Deferred Payment Products (see page 10). As these opportunities become clearer, we will consider them alongside our current transformation plans and incorporate into our plans as required.

Given the need to focus on the exceptional demand received in 2024/25, prioritising the changes to our funding regime allowing us to charge professional representatives who use our service, alongside identifying additional complexity in delivery, we have had to rephase some projects from 2024/25 to 2025/26. This rephasing has been reflected in our Plans and Budget for 2025/26.

# Our budget for 2025/26

## Our costs

Our total costs for 2025/26, including transformation costs, are projected to be £285m. This is £42m higher than the 2024/25 forecast costs of £243m and largely

reflects the additional casework, and supporting overhead, costs to achieve the increase of 45,000 resolved complaints year on year.

Figure 1: Summary of our key categories of costs

Cost summary	2023/24 actual £m	2024/25 budget £m	2024/25 latest forecast £m	2025/26 final budget £m
Casework marginal cost: direct cost of casework, primarily people cost	135	163	147	175
Casework overhead cost: casework management and direct support	10	13	14	15
Other overhead costs: IT, Property, HR, Finance, Legal, Communications	69	76	75	88
<b>Total operating expenditure</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>252</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>278</b>
Transformation: costs of step-changing the Financial Ombudsman Service	8	13	7	7
<b>Total cost</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>243</b>	<b>285</b>

## Casework costs

Casework marginal costs are budgeted at £175m and casework overhead costs at £15m, totalling £190m – 68% of our total operating expenditure. This year-on-year increase of £29m is driven by:

- £5m pay inflation (inclusive of additional employer National Insurance costs),
- £33m for increased casework resources to deliver the additional 45,000 resolved complaints,
- offset by £9m of operational efficiencies from transformation delivered. Other budgeted productivity improvement from our existing casework colleagues is offset by lower productivity from newly recruited caseworkers, as we scale up and they are trained to full competency.

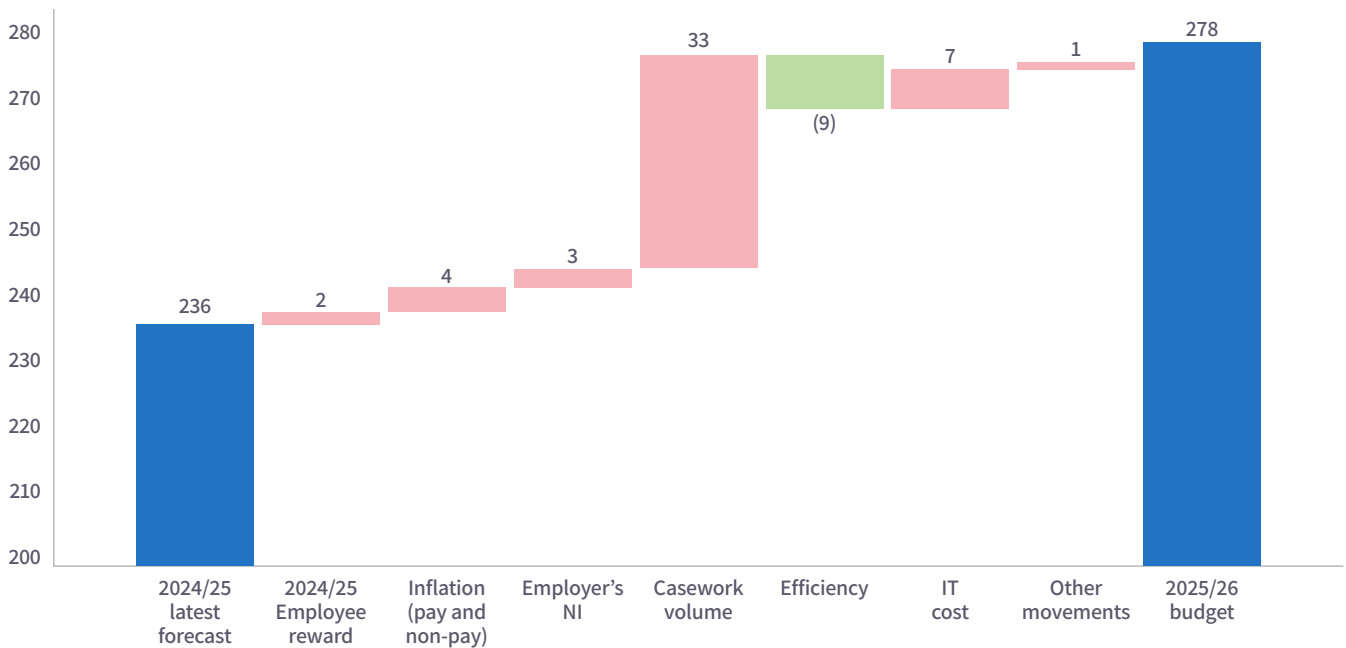
The motor finance commission cases with our service cannot currently be progressed to resolution whilst we await court and regulatory rulings. Our focus for 2025/26 is on reducing our non-motor finance commission stock position to an operationally efficient level, as quickly as possible – this requires an uplift in the level of casework full-time equivalent (FTE) in the first half of the year. This will also ensure we have people who can be cross trained relatively quickly should we need to work the motor finance commission cases in the future.

## Overhead costs

Overhead costs are budgeted to increase by £13m from 2024/25, due to:

- an increase of £7m in IT costs (including £3m extra project costs to support strategic cyber security work and resolving technical debt, £2m increase in cloud data costs, £1m increase in core IT system software licence costs, due to higher casework FTE)
- £2m pay inflation (inclusive of additional employer National Insurance costs)
- the overall cost of the employee reward scheme being £2m less than budget in 2024/25, which is not expected to be repeated and
- £1m increase, cost of new office space for Edinburgh and Cardiff locations.

Figure 2: Key movements in operating expenditure from 2024/25 to 2025/26



## Our unit cost

Our unit cost, or cost per case, is the average cost of resolving a complaint. It is equal to operating expenditure (total cost excluding finance costs and transformation) divided by the number of case resolutions. This gives us a measure that best reflects our ongoing total operational cost.

Based on this measure, our reported unit cost has reduced year on year from £1,116 in 2023/24 to £1,050 in our latest outlook for 2024/25. To ensure we deliver value for money, we focus on reducing both the marginal cost per case and overhead cost per case components of the total cost per case calculation.

Our budget for 2025/26 includes a cost per case of £1,029 - £21 lower than expected in our 2024/25 outturn. This reduction results from efficiencies that we have delivered through our transformation and other change initiatives, as well as overhead costs being spread across a higher volume of resolutions.

## Transformation costs

The budgeted transformation investment for 2025/26 is £9m (£7m operating expenditure, £2m capital expenditure), which is similar in scale to the investment for 2024/25 but around £4m less than the value consulted on. This change follows further prioritisation reviews and assessment of delivery feasibility.

While we successfully deployed some new capabilities in 2024/25, other projects are behind their original development and implementation schedule. This is for a variety of reasons, including additional complexity of delivery and the prioritisation of resources onto the critical, time-sensitive charging professional representatives billing project. This means the completion of some projects has been re-phased into 2026/27.

## Our funding

A key principle, that underpins our funding model, is to ensure we get the right balance between being able to recover our costs sustainably, holding an appropriate level of reserves and ensuring we offer value for money through efficiencies. Our recurring costs will ultimately be lower following delivery of operational efficiencies through the transformation investment and other improvement initiatives (on a like-for-like basis when adjusted for complaint volume). This means we will be able to deliver better value for money on a sustainable basis and operate on lower relative funding levels.

We are therefore taking forward the proposals set out in our consultation to keep levies and our case fees flat versus 2024/25 – saving respondent firms around £70m in 2025/26 compared to pricing in 2023/24.

In addition, as stated in our [policy statement](#) published on 7 February 2025, we are progressing with our proposals to charge professional representatives on referral of cases to our service.

Funding type	2024/25 latest forecast	2025/26 budget
CJ levy	£72m	£70m
VJ levy	£600,000	£600,000
Case fees	Respondent firms: £650 Non-group firms: three free cases Group firms: zero free cases and 5% tolerance No professional representatives charging	£650, reducing to £475 if the complaint is professionally represented and is closed as no change in outcome No change No change From 1 April 2025, professional representatives have ten free cases and then are charged a fee of £250, which falls to £75 if the case is closed as a change in outcome in favour of the complainant

Our overall income for 2025/26 is budgeted to be £29m higher than 2024/25. This includes:

- case-fee income increasing by £27m due to 45,000 more resolved cases
- an estimated income of £2m for charging professional representatives, which is the amount we will receive from a professional representative case regardless of outcome
- sublet income of £2m from an agreement starting in Q4 2024/25, for one floor in our Exchange Tower office, to cover costs, and
- a reduction of £2m in the CJ levy to a budget of £70m (from £72m collected by the FCA in 2024/25)

We have allowed for investment in the 2025/26 transformation budget to implement an updated billing system which will support a refined funding model. We will analyse the feedback received from the recent Call for Input, alongside other data points, to evaluate and consult on alternative funding models for future years.

## FEES instrument: amendments

Feedback received from our consultation on the proposed amendments to our FEES instrument supported our recommendations. As a result, in the final FEES instrument for 2025/26 we have delayed the widening of the definition of “relevant business”, which is adopted into the voluntary jurisdiction for the purpose of calculating the VJ levy.

The widened definition was originally intended to come into force on 1 April 2025 and would have required VJ participants to report to us business they

have conducted with all eligible complainants to the Financial Ombudsman Service, not just consumers. However, the revised definition is now planned to come into force on 1 April 2026 and will impact the nature of the data reported (which will be used to calculate the levy) for the 2026/27 fee year onwards.

We have also made minor consequential amendments to other parts of the FEES rules to insert appropriate cross references to the new FEES 5.5C ([representative case fees](#)), which comes into force on 1 April 2025.

## Our reserves

Our reserves policy remains to retain reserves of three to five months’ worth of operating expenditure, so that we ensure we have reasonable financial resilience to different types of events. The strategy remains to use any surplus reserves to avoid or reduce price rises to industry; fund transformation to improve the customer experience and operational efficiency; and underpin flexibility in casework

resourcing needs. Based on our demand and funding projections, plus our operating costs and transformation investments, we anticipate having an in-year deficit of £40m for 2025/26. This is deliberate and designed to hold flat pricing to industry year on year. This results in reserves covering four months of operating expenditure by the end of 2025/26.

Figure 3: Reserves movement budget 2025/26

	Marginal (casework) £m	Overheads (all) £m	Total £m
Income at 2023/24 prices	194	111	305
Inflationary increase (2%)	5	2	7
Price reduction from 1 April 2024	(31)	(40)	(278)
Operating income	168	73	241
Operating expenditure	(175)	(103)	(278)
<b>Net operating deficit</b>	<b>(7)</b>	<b>(30)</b>	<b>(37)</b>
Transformation investment			(7)
Net financing income			4
<b>Total net deficit to reserves</b>			<b>(40)</b>

# Financial summary

Financial summary	2023/24 actual £m	2024/25 budget £m	2024/25 latest forecast £m	2025/26 consultation £m	2025/26 budget £m
Case fee	90.3	87.7	100.3	123.1	123.8
Group fee	49.6	44.9	38.8	46.1	44.5
Levies	110.9	70.5	72.6	70.5	70.6
Rental and other income	0.1	0.1	0.3	2.0	2.0
<b>Total net income</b>	<b>250.9</b>	<b>203.2</b>	<b>212.0</b>	<b>241.7</b>	<b>240.9</b>
<b>Operating expenditure</b>					
Casework marginal costs	134.7	163.1	147.3	183.4	174.7
Casework overhead costs	10.2	13.4	13.8	14.4	15.5
IT costs including investments	28.0	33.0	30.0	34.8	37.3
Premises and facilities	13.8	13.4	14.2	12.5	13.2
Other costs	27.6	29.2	30.9	36.6	37.1
<b>Total operating expenditure</b>	<b>214.3</b>	<b>252.0</b>	<b>236.2</b>	<b>281.7</b>	<b>277.9</b>
<b>Operating surplus/deficit</b>	<b>36.6</b>	<b>(48.8)</b>	<b>(24.2)</b>	<b>(40.1)</b>	<b>(37.0)</b>
Finance income	10.9	8.7	9.5	4.6	5.2
Finance costs	(1.7)	(0.3)	(0.4)	(0.2)	(0.2)
Corporation tax	(2.4)	(2.2)	(2.3)	(1.1)	(1.3)
Transformation projects	(7.7)	(13.0)	(7.2)	(10.5)	(7.2)
<b>Financial surplus/deficit</b>	<b>35.6</b>	<b>(55.5)</b>	<b>(24.6)</b>	<b>(47.4)</b>	<b>(40.5)</b>
Reserves	158.4	102.8	133.7	76.1	93.2
Capital expenditure	(0.5)	(2.2)	(0.9)	-	(1.5)
<b>Operational data</b>					
Closing FTE	2,709	2,870	3,158	3,421	3,218
Total new cases (k)	199.0	210.0	330.0	240.0	209.0
Total case resolutions (k)	192.1	225.0	225.0	270.0	270.0
Closing stock (k)	80.9	65.9	189.7	120.4	128.7
Income per case	1,306	903	942	895	892
Operating expenditure per case	1,116	1,080	1,050	1,044	1,029
Reserves – months of expenditure	8.9	4.9	6.8	3.2	4.0



# Consultation feedback

## Detailed consultation feedback and our response

We consulted on our 2025/26 Plans and Budget for seven weeks from 11 December 2024 to 29 January 2025. We received 30 responses, 17 of which were from respondent firms, 11 from trade bodies and two from consumer groups. Responding organisations are listed in Appendix 1.

We have not included all the individual points made by respondents and stakeholders. Instead we have summarised the common or contrasting themes and issues.

## Complaint volumes and types

### What we asked

1. What volume and trends should we expect to see in complaints in 2025/26 in the following areas?

- a) Banking and consumer credit
- b) Insurance
- c) Investments and pensions
- d) SME volumes, CMC volumes and funeral plans

2. Which novel issues or trends might we see in 2025/26? And what impact do you think they will have on complaint volumes?

3. Do you agree with our projection on the percentage of complaints we will receive from professional representatives on behalf of consumers?

4. What challenges are you seeing and anticipating in connection with motor finance complaints while the regulatory review and legal appeal remain unresolved?

### Feedback received

- Respondents generally agreed with the volume forecasts set out in our consultation and the key drivers for this, particularly noting:
  - a continued increase in banking and consumer credit complaints, especially related to disputed transactions and fraud, driven by the sophistication of fraud techniques and new regulations on authorised push payment (APP) fraud

- while overall insurance numbers are likely to remain stable, the general insurance market may see a high level of motor insurance complaints due to higher costs and supply challenges
- in consumer credit, firms expect reduced complaint volumes, influenced by FCA interventions and the new CMC online form. However, “irresponsible” and “unaffordable” complaint volumes may continue to rise due to cost-of-living pressures
- Some respondents suggested we should expect to receive an increase in complaints in the short to medium term relating to the Consumer Duty, though they had not seen sufficiently clear trends to share yet.
- Increased financial advice through social media, and the growth in health insurance cover due to ongoing NHS resource constraints, were noted by some respondents as possible drivers for new complaint types and issues we might receive.
- On projections for complaints received from professional representatives, a few respondents agreed with our expectation that the volume of cases we would receive will fall, but others felt we will continue to see a high volume of cases from representatives as they considered maximum fee of £250 to be too low.

- Respondents agreed that the ongoing situation regarding motor finance commission cases is expected to cause uncertainty. There were mixed views on the volume of motor finance cases that we might receive. Most respondents suggested our forecast was too high, but some thought it may be too low. Some have expressed concerns about DCA cases being converted, given the FCA hold is in place until at least December 2025. They suggested we should explore alternatives to converting cases.
- Some respondents predict that the continued media interest in motor finance commission will lead to an increase in complaints about other motor finance issues, that are not related to commission.

### **Our response and next steps**

- We have adjusted the volumes for our projected incoming complaint volumes to reflect the FCA pause announced for MFC non-DCA cases in December 2024, and the trends we have been seeing during the period post-consultation.
- Regarding professional representatives, we will monitor the volume and quality of complaints received and review the pricing structure, as we would do in the normal course of business as part of our Plans and Budget consultations.

## **Projected service standards**

### **What we asked**

5. **Do you agree that the service standards we have set out will help our customers? Are there areas where you think we should be more ambitious?**
6. **What more can we do to share insight to prevent complaints and unfairness from arising?**

### **Feedback received**

#### **On service standards**

- Overall, respondents felt that the service standards proposed were the right ones and will help customers.
- A number of respondents were pleased to see the overall improvement in timeliness but noted that some of the targets set for 2025/26 could be more ambitious. For example, on “quality” it was suggested we could increase this from the 94% we are currently achieving; and on “cases closed within six months of conversion”, it was suggested that this should be targeted closer to the eight weeks that firms have to respond.
- However, it some respondents also noted that movement in the motor finance space would cause operational pressures.
- A few respondents raised doubts on the achievability of the 2025/26 targets given in the forecast for 2024/25, especially “resolving complaints within three months” – where forecast is 81% – and asked what we are doing to take us to 90%.
- Some respondents advocated for the use of AI to support our initial screening and document analysis, and to help identify areas of systemic risk.
- A few respondents mentioned that they felt the consistency of handling complaints between investigators and ombudsmen should be a focus, and that business satisfaction should also be a measure.
- A couple of respondents asked if we should be targeting vulnerability identification to provide feedback to firms.

## On data sharing

- All respondents felt that we should be sharing more data and in a timely manner.
- Some requested that we not only provide examples of resolved complaints by ombudsmen but also by investigators, as over 80% of our cases are resolved without ombudsman involvement.
- Others felt that our data publication needed greater insight into the trends and granular complaint types we receive within each sector, and root cause of issues, to help firms understand cross-cutting themes and improve outcomes for customers.
- Some suggested we host webinars/seminars on our approach to complaints – sharing insights into complaint handling, early engagement on the approach to new or emerging themes, and how to prevent complaints arising in the first place – and create more educational resources for both businesses and consumers.
- A few respondents suggested re-energising the Wider Implications Framework (WIF) to include firm representation so that this could become a forum for regulators, consumers, and firms to share insight, rather than being limited to just the regulatory family.

## Our response and next steps

- We are pleased most stakeholders agreed with our proposed service standards and appreciate the feedback provided. We are confident the measures provide a fair balance between ambitious and achievable, given the uncertainty the year will provide.
- To manage the consistency issue raised by respondents, we have improved the consistency and quality of our training for new permanent staff recruits through changes to our Academy. This will be widened to our contingent workforce from 1 April 2025.
- Our directorates will ensure regular communication with firms and share insights, which will be enhanced during 2025/26 and beyond.
- The topic of firm representation and engagement, along with sharing guidance and insight with firms, has been discussed by the WIF members.

## Projected cost

### What we asked

7. Have we captured the right priority areas in our transformation programme to drive both an improved customer experience and value for money?
8. What other areas should we consider in our transformation programme?

### Feedback received

- Most respondents felt that our transformation programme priorities are the right ones to drive customer experience and value for money.
- The business portal is viewed as a very good step forward and needs to be a priority to deliver. Firms were keen to hear more about the progress of this, and the expectations on them, to ensure they are ready for rollout.
- Respondents welcomed our pursuit of intelligent automation (IA) and artificial intelligence (AI) with the caveat that no inherent bias is built into any solutions. One area of potential concern was the mention of an “outcome predictor”, as this may lose the nuances of a complaint’s individual merits and thus discourage complainants from raising a valid complaint.
- The consumer portal was seen as positive, with the opportunity to introduce checks or monitoring at the portal stage to ensure basic documentation is submitted upfront and to aid early jurisdiction checks. It was also proposed that we invest in automatic rejection of out-of-jurisdiction cases to ensure these types of cases are identified at the outset.
- Some respondents noted a desire for us to have more of an emphasis on a prevention agenda. It was proposed that there should be more early engagement with businesses and consumers on certain topics, to allow them to understand, communicate and possibly adapt to any new developments or initiatives.
- One area that has been mentioned before is consistency in complaint handling, and therefore, some respondents felt training and initiatives to ensure consistency should also be a priority.

- There was some concern about the focus on digitisation and the potential impact on vulnerable customers being digitally excluded. More generally, there was a question about our plans to ensure vulnerable customers feel confident about using the service directly rather than through representatives, and how we ensure accessibility, for example, documents in Braille.
- There was positive feedback on our regional hubs approach.
- Firms welcome the investment in the budget to implement an updated billing system.

### **Our response and next steps**

- We welcome feedback and ideas from stakeholders. We are glad to see that our plans for using portals and other technology and expansion to regional hubs (as further set out in our transformation section of this paper) are in line with stakeholders' expectations. The feedback received has helped shape the prioritisation of projects for 2025/26.
- We will continue to engage with stakeholders as we progress our transformation, listening to ideas for how we can ensure we are providing the best service possible.

## **Our draft budget**

### **What we asked**

#### **9. Do you support our proposal to:**

- a. not increase our case fee or compulsory jurisdiction (CJ) levy for respondent firms?**
- b. not increase our voluntary jurisdiction (VJ) levy for respondent firms and delay the introduction of a 'relevant business' definition change to 1 April 2026?**

#### **10. Do you support our proposed overall budget for 2025/26?**

#### **11. Do you feel we are offering value for money? If not, where do you think we could improve?**

### **Feedback received**

- Most respondents supported our proposal to freeze case fee and levy prices.
- While welcoming the new charge for professional representatives to use our service, some respondents felt that our fee for professional representatives was set too low.
- A number of respondents requested that we reconsider our flat-fee structure and consider a tiered-fee structure, for example, by stage so proactive settlements get a lower fee.
- Some respondents queried if our reserves were on the low side and if we should be aiming for five to six months of operating costs.
- One respondent suggested an increase in the number of free cases for non-group firms as having only three was detrimental to smaller firms.
- A request was made for an exemption from case fees for all Community Finance Organisations.
- Some feedback provided was not relevant to the Plans and Budget consultation but to our Call for Input consultation. These comments have been passed to the relevant teams for review.

### **Our response and next steps**

- The appropriateness of all funding charges, and the sustainability of them, is reviewed each year as part of the financial planning cycle and in regard to our statutory purpose and macroeconomic events.
- We will continue to review our case-fee model to identify data points that would aid in introducing a differential case-fee model.

## Organisations who responded to the consultation

Association of British Credit Unions Ltd  
Association of British Insurers  
Association of Consumer Support Organisations  
Association of Mortgage Intermediaries  
Aviva  
Axa  
Barclays  
British Insurance Brokers Association  
Building Societies Association  
Capital One (Europe) Plc  
Consumer Credit Trade Association  
Direct Line Group  
Fair4All Finance  
Finance & Leasing Association  
HSBC  
Innovate Finance  
Lloyds Banking Group  
Nationwide  
NatWest Group  
NFU Mutual  
Phoenix Group  
Quilter  
Responsible Finance  
RSA  
Santander  
Society of Lloyds  
St James Place  
The British Vehicle Rental and  
Leasing Association  
UK Finance  
Which?



Financial Ombudsman Service  
Exchange Tower  
London  
E14 9SR

[stakeholder.enquiries@financial-ombudsman.org.uk](mailto:stakeholder.enquiries@financial-ombudsman.org.uk)

