Financial Ombudsman Service

Ombudsman Connect for Business: Key information document

Prepared by the Financial Ombudsman Service

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Document purpose and scope

This document provides key information about Ombudsman Connect for Business – the Financial Ombudsman Service's self-serve portal for financial services providers (businesses).

The scope of this document covers:

1. About Ombudsman Connect for Business: an overview

Ombudsman Connect for Business makes the Financial Ombudsman Service more accessible, user-friendly and efficient. It will allow your business to self-serve at your convenience by offering a range of features that streamline the way you interact with us.

Through Ombudsman Connect for Business, you can view the status of your cases, identify priority cases, and see what actions are needed to progress complaints. Ombudsman Connect for Business also provides an overview of key data, such as uphold rates, while enabling you to store and manage case-related documents in one place.

These features empower businesses to take a more proactive approach to resolving complaints and offer valuable insights into where they can improve their own processes – potentially helping to reduce the number of complaints referred to our service.

Ombudsman Connect for Business is intended to be the primary method businesses use to share case documents and notifications with us.

It's a standard web application, accessed by a URL protected under HTTPS/TLS standards. It has been designed and delivered through secure Microsoft Azure Cloud services. The application follows in-depth security standards that cover all underlying infrastructure, network connectivity and data storage.

Data that is shown in Ombudsman Connect for Business is sourced from the Financial Ombudsman Service's case management systems.

2. User profiles and available features

There are three business-user roles in Ombudsman Connect for Business:

1. Administrator
2. Caseworker
3. Supervisor

Administrator role

Administrators are responsible for managing the user account on behalf of their business, including by:

- enabling and disabling user accounts
- managing user access
- resetting security questions for users, as required (non-federation only).

A minimum of one administrator is required to onboard a business. The administrator's details will be requested by the Financial Ombudsman Service as part of a business' onboarding process.

We recommend a minimum of two administrators to accommodate any unplanned leave.

Administrators can assign themselves caseworker or supervisor access, if they require access to case data.

Caseworker and supervisor roles

Caseworkers and supervisors have access to individual case information to enable them to remain informed about the status of cases, identify priority cases, and see what actions are needed to progress complaints. They also have access to their business's key complaints data and case lists.

The features available to caseworkers and supervisors in Ombudsman Connect for Business (listed below), support faster and smoother complaint resolution by enabling users to share information and documents with us more efficiently. By surfacing information in a central place – and clearly showing what is required to progress each case – Ombudsman Connect for Business removes unnecessary delays and helps ensure cases move forward quickly.

Caseworker and supervisor access can be initiated, managed and deleted by their business' administrator user.

Features available to authorised users by role

Functionality	Caseworker	Supervisor	Administrator
View key data points for open cases (open cases dashboard)	✓	✓	
View, sort, filter and export case lists (open and closed cases)	✓	✓	
View individual case details	✓	✓	
Upload documents to cases and track the status of uploads	✓	✓	
Send notifications on individual cases and in bulk	✓	✓	
View and download key case documents	✓	✓	
Allocate cases to themselves	✓	✓	
Allocate cases to other users		✓	

Functionality	Caseworker	Supervisor	Administrator
Invite new users and manage their access			✓
Remove user access			✓
Reset multi-factor authentication (MFA) and security questions for users			✓
Technical support	✓	✓	✓

3. Terms of use and our privacy notice

Ombudsman Connect for Business users require individual accounts, identifiable by business email address. We do not permit access the use of shared accounts.

Before accessing any data in Ombudsman Connect for Business, individual users will be required to accept the terms of use on behalf of their respondent business.

Businesses are responsible for managing their users – and ensuring they act in accordance with the Terms of Use.

Our privacy notice explains how users can expect us to use the personal information they, or their organisation, provide when they access Ombudsman Connect for Business.

Both the terms of use and the privacy notice can also be accessed within Ombudsman Connect for Business.

4. Technical support

Our Technical Helpdesk is available to support users with any technical queries about Ombudsman Connect for Business. It is available:

- Monday to Friday, from 8am to 10pm
- Saturday and Sunday, from 12pm to 4pm.

This includes bank holidays except for Christmas Day.

Users can access the Helpdesk by using:

- the webform link in their invite email for queries prior to logging in, or
- the chat function at the bottom right of the screen for queries after logging in.

Our Technical Helpdesk will answer technical queries relating to Ombudsman Connect for Business functionality, but not casework queries. All case-related queries should be sent through existing channels, or through the 'case update' function of Ombudsman Connect for Business.

5. Accessing Ombudsman Connect for Business

To give access to Ombudsman Connect for Business, we need some information from businesses, including:

1. The business(es) access is required for (businesses' full name and Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) reference number)
2. The full names and email addresses of any appointed administrators
3. Email domain names
4. Identity provider
5. Chosen method of authentication and associated technical data if federated authentication is selected.

Requests for access need to be submitted through our Ombudsman Connect for Business: Access request form which can be found on our website.

You may need to get some of the information above from your Information Technology (IT) team. A separate Onboarding technical information guide designed for IT teams can be found on our website – along with support for completing the Access request form.

Once we have received the information we need from your business, we will email an invitation to your appointed administrator. Caseworkers and supervisors will subsequently receive their email invitations from their administrator.

Permitted users can access Ombudsman Connect for Business from any standard web browser (e.g. Chrome, Edge, Safari) using their chosen authentication method.

6. FAQs

Technical and data

Q. Do we need special equipment to access Ombudsman Connect for Business?

No. All you need is a web browser. We'll need information from you to configure your accounts before we can authorise access.

Further detail about the information we need to onboard a business can be found above.

Q. Does Ombudsman Connect for Business support 'single sign on' (SSO) identity management?

Yes. We support the use of 'security assertion markup language' (SAML) and 'OpenID Connect' (OIDC) for federation to provide single sign on.

Q. Does Ombudsman Connect for Business support multi-factor authentication (MFA)?

Ombudsman Connect for Business can enable multi-factor authentication. If you are not using federation, you will need to create a local user account using MFA.

Q. Are cookies used in Ombudsman Connect for Business?

Yes, Ombudsman Connect for Business needs some functional cookies. Users can manage and change their cookies preference for functional and analytical cookies within the Portal.

A full list of cookies used can be found in our privacy notice.

Q. How is personal data processed and stored in Ombudsman Connect for Business?

Consumer data available to businesses is securely sourced from the Financial Ombudsman Service's corporate systems. Consumer data that respondent businesses share through Ombudsman Connect for Business is sent through this secure API Layer and securely stored by the solution.

Consumer data in the Financial Ombudsman Service's corporate systems and Ombudsman Connect for Business comply with our data protection and necessary data retention policies. Our data retention policies are applicable to all data sets, including consumer data received from respondent businesses.

Data in transit and at rest is encrypted using HTTPS/TLS 1.2, AES-256.

Our privacy notice provides further information about how we use the personal information provided by users accessing Ombudsman Connect for Business.

Q. What is the retention period for personal data related to Ombudsman Connect for Business user accounts?

We will retain the personal information required for access to Ombudsman Connect for Business as long as individuals remain active users of Ombudsman Connect for Business.

Access to Ombudsman Connect for Business will be disabled after 60 days of inactivity. Personal information used to access Ombudsman Connect for Business will be deleted 30 days after this.

Details of contact with the Technical Helpdesk – along with any related tickets generated – will be held for 120 days from the date of resolution.

Q. Are user monitoring logs provided for ongoing activity?

User activity and access to Ombudsman Connect for Business are monitored by our Security Operations team. Businesses do not have access to user monitoring logs.

Q. Does Ombudsman Connect for Business offer user-based role management?

Access to Ombudsman Connect for Business user is role based. Depending on the role assigned to the logged-in user the appropriate features are enabled or disabled. See Section 2 above.

Operation and function

Q. Is there a way to restrict access to cases on Ombudsman Connect for Business?

Once a user has been onboarded to Ombudsman Connect for Business, they can view case data for the business accounts they have been granted access to.

We can suppress visibility of an individual case, if requested. This will prevent all users from viewing and actioning the suppressed case in Ombudsman Connect for Business. Suppressed cases will be counted within overall volume statistics.

To request a case is suppressed and hidden from all users, please send a case notification on Ombudsman Connect for Business or email casework.

Q. Can we add administrators after our initial onboarding?

At least one administrator is required to onboard a business – and their details will be requested as part of the onboarding process. Additional administrators can be added after your initial onboarding, by contacting our Technical Helpdesk during operating hours or by webform.

Requests for additional administrators will need to be made by existing administrators or supervisors.

Q. What is the difference between caseworker and supervisor user access?

Both caseworkers and supervisors have access to case data for the businesses they have been authorised to access. Please see table in Section 2 above.

Q. Is Ombudsman Connect for Business free to use?

Yes, Ombudsman Connect for Business is free for all authorised business users.

Further information

See our website for more information about Ombudsman Connect for Business.