

Minutes – Trade Body Industry Steering Group

5 December 2024, MS Teams

Financial Ombudsman Service attendees	Industry attendees
<p>Abby Thomas, Chief Executive and Chief Ombudsman</p> <p>Mark Dungworth, Stakeholder and Regulatory Liaison Lead</p>	<p>Natalie McQuade, Association of British Credit Unions (ABCUL)</p> <p>Charlotte Wightwick, Association of British Insurers (ABI)</p> <p>Andrew Whyte, Association of Financial Mutuals (AFM)</p> <p>Elaine Morton, Building Societies Association (BSA)</p> <p>David Sparkes, British Insurance Broker Association (BIBA)</p> <p>Jason Wassell, Consumer Credit Trade Association (CCTA)</p> <p>Claire Aynsley, Credit Services Association (CSA)</p> <p>Andy Thornley, Innovate Finance</p> <p>Fiona Hoyle, Finance and Leasing Association (FLA)</p> <p>Jo Stickland, Investment and Life Assurance Group (ILAG)</p> <p>Eric Leenders, UK Finance</p>

Item	Agenda
1.	Welcome and introductions
2.	Financial Ombudsman Service Plan and Budget
3.	Update on plans to charge professional representatives
4.	Redress reform – call for input
5.	Any other business/Close

1. Welcome and Introductions

1.1 The Financial Ombudsman Service opened the meeting, welcomed attendees and introduced the agenda.

2. Financial Ombudsman Service plan and budget

2.1 The Financial Ombudsman Service gave an update on operational performance for the Service, highlighting improved case resolution times, reduced cost per case, and stable

quality scores. Caseworker productivity had increased by 17%, though overall demand had risen by 60% year-on-year. It gave an overview of the key points from the plan and budget consultation, setting out that there were no plans to change case fees, levies or free cases. The group welcomed this and discussed possible changes to the Service's invoicing model.

3. Charging professional representatives

- 3.1 The Financial Ombudsman Service confirmed plans to introduce charges for professional representatives, subject to the formal steps required including FCA Board approval. Timescales for implementation were dependent on these steps.
- 3.2 The group discussed increasing numbers of Data Subject Access Requests (DSARs) from representatives, with some firms seeing a three- to fourfold rise, and rising complaint volumes from representatives before they were required to use the Service's new online form in October (which had since led to a drop-off in complaints. The Financial Ombudsman Service noted that other work was underway in addition to charging to tackle poor-quality complaints, including regulatory referrals and engagement.

4. Redress reform: Call for Input (CFI)

- 4.1 The Financial Ombudsman Service noted that the CFI followed significant engagement with HM Treasury on improving the framework within which it operates. Many of the current rules are over a decade old, and the Service itself was established 25 years ago in a very different context. She talked through key areas of the CFI and encouraged the group to respond.
- 4.2 The group expressed broad support for the redress reform agenda and discussed key themes in the CFI. This included the need for closer alignment between the Service and the FCA; the importance of regularity clarity and predictability; and the need for increased engagement on emerging issues.
- 4.3 The Financial Ombudsman Service said that changes could be made through both legislative and operational avenues, including reforms to DISP; and that the Service remained open to feedback and committed to collaboration and engagement in the reform process.

5. Close

- 5.1 The Financial Ombudsman Service reiterated that it was looking forward to seeing responses to the CFI and plan and budget, and thanked the group for joining the call.