



Treasury Committee

House of Commons, Committee Office, London SW1A 0AA

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Abby Thomas
Chief Executive and Chief Ombudsman
Financial Ombudsman Service
Via email

22 March 2024

Dear Ms Thomas,

Thank you for the oral evidence you gave on Tuesday 27 February.¹ You agreed to write back with responses to the following questions set out below. We have, for reference, given the question number in the transcript where relevant, and in some instances, have asked follow-up questions for clarification.

1. What is the number of cases in your backlog which are over 18 months old? (Q225)
2. What is the number of debanking complaints in 2023/24 compared to 2022/23 and 2021/22? Of them, what proportion of them relate to businesses? Please also provide the numbers of complaints upheld, and more detail on the reasons for complaints. (Q 245/Q246)?
 - In our [correspondence](#) with banks, we found that banks had closed down more than 140,000 business accounts in the past year. However, your [letter](#) to us of 6 October 2023 shows that complaints by SMEs to the FOS are only in the hundreds. Do you find it surprising that complaints to the FOS from SMEs on debanking are so low relative to the numbers of business accounts, banks have reported they have closed?
 - Are you concerned that not enough SMEs know about the FOS? How do you ensure that SMEs know about the FOS?
3. Please can you respond to us about apparent inconsistencies in the way consumers have been treated by the FOS, which have been raised in this *Sunday Times* article (The Sunday Times, [Why fraud compensation is such a lottery](#), 10 December 2023)(Q251)?
4. How many cases related to car finance loans are over 12 months old and over 18 months old (Q 266)?
5. What are the numbers of people working on resolutions in de-banking and car finance loans, and have they reduced from the previous financial year (Q 239)?
6. How many cases related to fractional timeshares are over 12 months old and over 18 months old (Q 279)?

¹ committees.parliament.uk/oralevidence/14353/pdf/

7. What is the ratio of complaints about your service to your caseload (complaints/case load ratio) this financial year 2023/24 and 2022/23 (Q 297)?
8. Please can you provide the number of cases that the FOS has had to revisit as a result of the Independent Assessor's work in this financial year 2023/24 and the previous one, 2022/23 (Q304)?
 - How many final decisions that the FOS made and communicated to consumers had to be over-turned at a later date this financial year (2023/24) and last 2022/23?
9. What is the current attrition rate of new investigators? Do you regard that as high (Q 305)?

We would be grateful for a response to these questions by Friday, 5 April 2024. In line with our usual practice, we would expect to publish this letter and your response.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'H. Baldwin'.

Harriett Baldwin MP
Chair of the Treasury Committee