



## Treasury Committee

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Caroline Wayman  
Chief Ombudsman and Chief Executive  
Financial Ombudsman Service  
Via email

4 January 2021

Dear Caroline,

Thank you for your response to my letter of 20 November, in which you have provided further evidence to the Committee. I also note that the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS) has published its 2021/22 plans and budget consultation.

I would like to follow up on a few further points:

- a) How has the FOS Board challenged the proposed budget and funding proposals?
- b) Given the expectation that growing complexity will increase cost per case, what action (with timescales) is being taken to improve case handling times and reduce costs, while ensuring that the cases are handled well?
- c) Please provide a table outlining the staff service level agreement on timescales for different stages of a case; and set out what action is taken if these are not met.
- d) What strategy (with timescales) is being put in place to clear the backlog of 37,689 cases that have not yet been allocated to a case handler and 56,348 open cases that are more than six months old?
- e) How do case-handlers 'specialise' where greater in-depth knowledge is required and how are cases appropriately allocated to these specialist case-handlers?
- f) Given the lack of diversity at senior levels (including the executive, senior managers, and ombudsman panel) particularly in relation to Black, Asian, and Mixed staff members, what action are you taking to improve recruitment and promotion opportunities for ethnic minority staff?

I shall be placing this letter and your response in the public domain. I would be grateful if you could provide a response by 25 January 2021.

With best wishes,

Rt Hon. Mel Stride MP  
Chair, Treasury Select Committee