



Fair Business Banking

Background

The APPG on Fair Business Banking and Finance is one of the most effective cross-party organisations in Parliament, with over 120 MPs and Peers supporting the group. The APPG focuses on key, transformative and deliverable objectives.

It was formed in 2012 and is chaired by Kevin Hollinrake MP (Conservative) and Norman Lamb MP (Liberal Democrats), with vice-chairs Lord Cromwell (Crossbench), Martin Whitfield MP (Labour), Lisa Cameron MP (SNP), Sammy Wilson MP (DUP), and the Earl of Lindsay (Conservative) and is the leading parliamentary body dealing with business banking issues faced by constituents as well as access to business finance.

The APPG is not a talking shop. We focus on achievable objectives that can be implemented on a voluntary level within industry or by legislative reform.

Key objectives

1. Fair Contracts

We have established a Contracts Working Group that places the major banks in the same room as representatives of SMEs to create an equal contracts environment. This is an ongoing process.

2. Independent Dispute Resolution

Highlighting the current situation whereby many SMEs who have suffered mistreatment do not have access to justice. Pressing the financial regulator and the banking sector to address our calls to change the current system of dispute resolution. The FCA recently announced their consultation to extend the Financial Ombudsman Service, but we feel this cannot be the only solution. We are working with key industry figures and policy makers to take this further by creating a Financial Services Tribunal. We have reached the stage that all parties are in agreement that we need to provide a solution for the issue of access to complex dispute resolution - it is now just a matter of delivering this in the right way. We will release a report addressing the intricacies of this proposal before August.

3. Insolvency

We are coordinating with BEIS, the Insolvency Service, industry and key ministers to address issues in insolvency that have been highlighted during the financial crisis.

Contact details

Please get in touch if you would like further information/briefings on any of our workstreams:

Heather Buchanan, Director of Policy – buchananh@parliament.uk

Ollie Fyfe, Parliamentary Assistant – fyfe@parliament.uk

Workstreams moving forward

1. Whistleblowing

We are working with Whistleblowers UK and Public Concern at Work to propose an Office of the Whistleblower. This has been taken up by BEIS for further evaluation. It is crucial that the right structures are in place to allow whistleblowers to have a voice and raise concerns.

2. Access to finance for sustainable growth

One of the key areas brought to MPs is access to finance and funding for sustainable growth. Productivity and employment are driven by small businesses, and therefore appropriate support for their development must be in place. We are bringing together senior and influential figures and organisations in alternative finance, commercial banking, policy and business in order to understand the key challenges in financing businesses for sustainable growth. The aim of this workstream is to create a working group to identify achievable objectives with the aim of establishing what the future stable capital formation structure for UK SMEs could be.