

## **The Business Banking Resolution Service**

The Business Banking Resolution Service (BBRS) is a non-profit organisation providing a free, accessible and independent service to resolve disputes between eligible businesses and participating banks.

### **Who can use our Service**

To use the BBRS' services an SME must fit the eligibility criteria for our historical or contemporary scheme.

More detailed information can be found on our website, but broadly we are able to assist with claims:

- From UK registered businesses, trusts, charities, friendly societies and co-operative societies
- Relating to an unresolved complaint against one of the banks participating in the BBRS
- For historical cases (from 1 December 2001 to 31 March 2019) businesses must have a maximum turnover up to £6.5m per annum; and a balance sheet of up to £5m
- For contemporary cases (from 1 April 2019 onwards) businesses must have a turnover/income up to £10m per annum; and a balance sheet of up to £7.5m
- The complaint must also not be eligible for the Financial Ombudsman Service

### **Which banks are participating in the BBRS?**

There are currently seven banks for which we are able to accept complaints:

- Barclays Bank PLC and Barclays Bank UK PLC
- Danske Bank
- HSBC UK Bank plc
- Lloyds Banking Group (Lloyds Bank plc and Bank of Scotland plc)
- NatWest Group (including The Royal Bank of Scotland Plc, National Westminster Bank plc, Coutts & Company and Ulster Bank Limited (Northern Ireland))
- Santander UK plc
- Virgin Money (including Clydesdale Bank PLC and Yorkshire Bank)

Alternative trading names and subsidiary banks within the corporate group of the participating banks are also eligible for the BBRS.

The BBRS hopes that additional banks will join as the service develops. Any changes to the list of participating banks will be set out on the BBRS' website.

### **What does the process involve?**

When you register your case with the BBRS, we will need details about you and your business as well as information about the complaint you made to your bank. We will then perform a preliminary eligibility check. We will keep your eligibility under review as your case progresses through the BBRS process.

You will then be assigned a [Customer Champion](#). They will be your point of contact throughout your involvement with the BBRS, and will provide you with practical support.

Your Customer Champion will explain the BBRS process to you, assist you in articulating your case, and help you identify relevant documents to support your complaint. Once we have identified all elements of your complaint, we will contact your bank so they can respond and send in their evidence.

You will be given access to our specially designed online system to work efficiently with your Customer Champion in uploading documents and evidence, sending and receiving messages and dealing with requests as your case progresses. The online system will keep a record of everything, and your Customer Champion can help if you have any questions or concerns, including arranging an alternative method if you are unable to work online.

You will then be given the chance to see any evidence the bank has provided, and at the same time the bank will get to see any evidence you have sent us.

Your Customer Champion will ensure that you have the chance to respond to the bank's evidence. The bank will be able to comment on your evidence as well. Your Customer Champion will explain options for resolving your complaint, which may include [early settlement, mediation, conciliation or adjudication](#).

## FAQs

### *Is the BBRS independent?*

Yes, the BBRS is independent. Our funding mechanism and corporate structure are designed to ensure our independence. For example, there is no link between a bank's funding and any individual case.

The independence of our Chief Adjudicator is safeguarded directly by the [Scheme Rules](#) and the BBRS' Articles of Association. And the organisation's independence is safeguarded by our independent Board.

Most importantly, we approach the review of evidence and decision-making with objectivity and impartiality. We are committed to reaching decisions which are fair & reasonable in all the circumstances.

### *What will it cost me?*

The BBRS is free: there are no costs for the services provided by the BBRS.

### *Do I need a lawyer?*

The BBRS has been established to provide a service that does not involve litigation or require external legal support. You are able to choose to seek advice from a lawyer if you wish and at your own cost.

### *If I am eligible for the Financial Ombudsman Service (FOS), can I choose to take my complaint to the BBRS instead of the Financial Ombudsman Service?*

No. If your complaint is eligible for the Financial Ombudsman Service, you must take it there because we will not be able to deal with it. If you are unsure about your eligibility for that service, you can find details [here](#).

**Important:** The Financial Ombudsman Service has a deadline for bringing complaint(s) of six months after the date of the bank's final response letter to you. If you miss this deadline, you will most likely lose the opportunity to have your complaint independently reviewed.

### *I have taken out a loan through the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS), am I eligible for the BBRS?*

If you meet all our eligibility criteria, we will be able to consider a complaint relating to the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS). In doing so, we will take account of the regulatory context surrounding the provision of a loan under the CBILS, which were modified by the regulators to enable the timely provision of such loans.

### *I have taken out a loan through the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs), am I eligible for the BBRS?*

No. We are unable to consider complaints relating to the Bounce Back Loan Scheme.

### *Your website says I need to have a turnover of more than €2 million but less than £6.5 million – why have you used Euros? Do I need to convert my turnover into Euros based on the current exchange rate or at the time of my complaint?*

SMEs with an annual turnover of less than €2m have been eligible for the Financial Ombudsman Service since 1 November 2009 up till 1 April 2019 (when the annual turnover threshold increased to £6.5M). The

classification of businesses with up to €2m turnover as 'micro-enterprises' reflects the EU definition which has been adopted by the UK government.

The BBRS applies a lower threshold of €2m to ensure that there is no gap between our historical scheme and cases eligible for the Financial Ombudsman Scheme. Thus eligible SMEs could either have taken their complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service if their turnover was below €2m or can now bring it to the BBRS if their turnover was above €2m and less than £6.5m. The turnover limits apply to the time when you complained to your bank so the exchange rate from the same time should be used.