



Press Release

Financial Services Ombudsman Releases 2016 Annual Review

(31 March 2017) The Financial Services Ombudsman (FSO) has today published his Annual Review for the year 2016. The Review provides a summary of complaints made to the FSO in 2016 and details the complaints record of individual financial service providers with three or more complaints upheld or partly upheld in 2016.

The main focus of 2016 was the introduction of a new Dispute Resolution Service, which aims to resolve disputes through mediation at an early stage. This new service has been very successful with over half of all complaints dealt with through this method. It has also significantly reduced the timeframes involved in dealing with complaints. Key statistics from the 2016 Review include;

Complaints received;

- 4,334 valid complaints received in 2016 (2,198 complaints were also active from previous years)
- 2,232 (52%) complaints received related to banking products (led by mortgages)
- 1,866 (43%) complaints received related to insurance products (led by motor insurance)
- 236 (5%) complaints received related to investment products

Complaints closed;

- 4,323 complaints were dealt with in 2016
- Over 1,800 complainants received some form of compensation, rectification or financial redress
- 2,421 complaints were closed through the new Dispute Resolution Service
- 46% of successful mediations were resolved within two months
- 727 legally binding findings were issued following adjudication. Of these, 101 complaints were upheld and 216 were partly upheld

In publishing the Review, Financial Ombudsman Ger Deering said; “As the numbers bear out, last year saw us undertake more direct interactions with both consumers and providers and deliver a faster and more effective service thanks to our new dedicated dispute resolution service.”

He continued; “Of course, this isn’t all about numbers, these are real people with real complaints for whom the work of this office makes an important difference in their lives and personal feedback into the office since the new service came into effect has been overwhelmingly positive.”

Mr Deering added, however, that access to Financial Services remained a concern; “The volume of complaints remains high and I have been concerned to note, in a number of complaints to this office, the manner in which some banks and insurance companies either denied or curtailed services to customers. Access to certain financial services in the banking and insurance sectors is not a luxury. For most people, this is an essential part of everyday living and I will continue to pay particular attention to the conduct of banks and insurance companies to ensure that their conduct is fair, reasonable and proportionate.”

Ends

Notes for Editors:

- The Financial Services Ombudsman was established in 2005 by the Central Bank and Financial Services Authority of Ireland Act 2004 (the Act) to deal independently with complaints from consumers about their dealings with financial service providers.
- The FSO has the power to award compensation of up to €250,000 where a complaint is upheld. Compensation is not the only remedy available from the FSO, he also has powers of rectification.
- The Government in 2013 decided to amalgamate the offices of the Financial Services Ombudsman and the Pensions Ombudsman. This will require enabling legislation. In the meantime, provision was made in the Social Welfare and Pensions Act 2015 to appoint the holder of the post of Financial Services Ombudsman to the post of Pensions Ombudsman.
- Ger Deering was appointed Financial Services Ombudsman in April 2015 and Pensions Ombudsman in May 2016.

Enquiries:

media@financialombudsman.ie

Telephone (01) 631 8632

Website: www.financialombudsman.ie