

The APPG on Fair Business Banking 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 Normal 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). It 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. Independent Dispute Resolution

Highlighting the current situation whereby many SMEs who have suffered mistreatment do not have access to justice, we are 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 Services, 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 not just a matter of delivering this in the right way. Our *Fair Business Banking for All* report addresses the intricacies of these proposals.

### 2. Fairer 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.

### 3. Insolvency Reform

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.

## Workstreams Moving Forward

### 1. Whistleblowing

We are working with Whistleblowers UK and Public Concern at Work to propose an Office for 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. We are also working with the newly formed APPG on Whistleblowing on these issues and we will support them where necessary in the future.

### 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.

## Contact Details

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

Heather Buchanan, Director of Policy and Strategy – [buchananh@parliament.uk](mailto:buchananh@parliament.uk)

James Ventress, Parliamentary Assistant – [ventressj@parliament.uk](mailto:ventressj@parliament.uk)

An All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) is an interest group that occupies a strategic and effective position within Parliament. It is cross-party, with a minimum number of parliamentarians from the Government and the official opposition, and cross-house, made up of both peers and MPs. The APPG on Fair Business Banking is a platform through which businesses, professionals and trade bodies can discuss issues regarding commercial banking and its role in the life cycle of a business, and through which parliamentarians can access information on banking, finance and related issues, including business rescue and insolvency, on behalf of constituents. As a cross-party group, the APPG is an effective vehicle to effect meaningful change via the Parliamentary system. The Group's status is that of an APPG is bound by the rules set out by The Office of the Parliamentary Commissioner for Standards. It does not have charitable status, or official status in the House, nor is it funded by Parliament. It relies wholly on the participation and contribution of parliamentarians, industry members and stakeholders committed to creating a strong platform for business in the UK to thrive. The APPG is coordinated and administered via the APPG on Fair Business Banking Secretariat.