

What is CIFO?

The Channel Islands Financial Ombudsman (CIFO) is an independent office that resolves complaints about financial services provided in or from Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney and Sark.

As an alternative to the court system, we provide an impartial and prompt resolution of complaints. We work informally and confidentially, our service is free and you don't need legal representation.

I have a complaint about a financial matter, what should I do?

Contact the provider: You should first take up your complaint with the financial service provider involved to give them an opportunity to resolve it. They have up to 3 months to give you a final response.

Contact CIFO: If you are not happy with their response, or have not received one after 3 months, you can refer your complaint to CIFO. You can do this by filling out a complaint form on our website at www.ci-fo.org or send one to us by post, email or fax. If you need help completing the form, or have any questions, please contact us.

What will be the effect of an Ombudsman's decision?

If you or the financial service provider don't agree with what we say, the Ombudsman will make a formal, final decision.

If the Ombudsman decides in your favour, he can award compensation, payable by the financial service provider, up to a maximum of £150,000.

If you accept the decision, it will become legally binding on both parties.

If you don't accept the Ombudsman's decision, you will still have the right to take legal action against your provider.

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Channel Islands
**Financial
Ombudsman**

Fairness of **outcome...**
Fairness of **process...**

Resolving complaints about financial services provided in or from the Channel Islands.



Who can complain to CIFO?

CIFO is able to look at complaints from individual consumers, micro-enterprises, and small local charities.

What is a micro-enterprise?

A micro-enterprise is the Europe-wide definition given to a small business or economic enterprise (including a sole trader, partnership or company) that employs fewer than 10 people with an annual turnover of less than 2 million Euros.

What if I don't live in the Channel Islands?

CIFO can look at complaints from individuals and micro-enterprises around the world, providing they concern a financial service provided in or from within the Channel Islands of Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney or Sark.

What types of financial services can I complain about?

Broadly, CIFO can look at complaints about banking, lending, money services, insurance, pensions and some types of investments.

How much will it cost?

It does not cost anything to bring a complaint to CIFO. The scheme is free to complainants.

How long does it take?

CIFO considers each case carefully, and the time it takes to reach a decision varies depending on the complexity of the issue. Some cases may be resolved in just a few weeks, but others will take longer.

Do I need legal advice or other assistance?

CIFO is a free alternative to the courts, and we will explain anything you're not sure about, so you don't need to pay for legal advice.

If you prefer, you may use a representative to work with us on your behalf, such as a relative or friend.

How far back can CIFO go?

The event that led to the complaint must have happened on or after 1 January 2010 (for Jersey financial service providers) or 2 July 2013 (for Guernsey/Alderney/Sark financial service providers).

Are there any other time limits?

You should bring your complaint to us within 6 months of your financial service provider's final response to your complaint.

We might not be able to help if what you're complaining about happened more than 6 years ago and you complain more than 2 years after you realise (or could have realised) there is a problem.

How do you resolve complaints?

CIFO will work with you and the financial service provider over the phone and in writing, helping both sides agree to a fair outcome.

What do you consider in reaching a decision?

During an investigation, we gather information from both parties and review the facts of the case. We make decisions based on what's fair to both the consumer and the financial service provider, taking into account general principles of good financial services and business practices, the law, regulatory policies and guidance, and any applicable professional body, standards, codes of practice, or codes of conduct.