



An tOmbudsman Seirbhísí
Airgeadais agus Pinsean
Financial Services and
Pensions Ombudsman

Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman publishes Strategic Plan for 2021 - 2024

Strategic Plan focuses on Connecting and Innovating

26 November 2021: Following the launch by the Minister for Finance, Mr Paschal Donohoe, the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman has published the second [Strategic Plan for the Office of the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman \(FSPO\)](#). Covering the period 2021-2024, the Plan, 'Connecting and Innovating', builds on the FSPO's delivery in its first three years of operation, during which time, the FSPO concluded more than 15,200 complaints. The priorities outlined in the new Strategic Plan reflect both the FSPO's statutory role and the organisation's values and reflect the FSPO's ambition to evolve and innovate its services and focus on its customers, external stakeholders and audiences.

Launching the FSPO's Strategic Plan, the Minister said, "The Office of the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman (FSPO) has achieved a great deal since its establishment in 2018 and has produced an ambitious plan for the next three years. This plan will see it evolve its service to respond to the changing needs and expectations of consumers. The work of the Ombudsman is central to underpin consumer confidence. I welcome the Ombudsman's intention to further grow awareness of the Office and its role."

Chairperson of the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman Council, Ms. Maeve Dineen, commented that, "The FSPO is deeply committed to delivering the best possible service for all its customers and delivering its important role as part of a robust consumer protection framework, influencing the financial service and pension landscape. Over the lifetime of this Strategic Plan, the FSPO will share its insights and work to influence the broader environment. In doing so, it will help to raise standards in complaints handling and resolution, and inform legislative, regulatory and policy developments. In addition, the Strategic Plan prioritises connecting and engaging with consumers, providers, regulatory bodies and others to help build a better understanding of the FSPO, including through programmes to reach groups of consumers who may have lower levels of awareness of the FSPO's services."

Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman Ger Deering said, "Our staff played a central role in developing this Strategic Plan, and its success will be driven by the commitment of our staff. I would like to pay tribute to our staff, whose adherence to our values and commitment to quality customer service and delivering our statutory role ensures an avenue of resolution for those with complaints against regulated financial service providers and pension providers, where those complaints have not been resolved. In our first three years of operation, more than 16,300 complaints have been made to the FSPO and this Strategic Plan outlines how we will manage the ever-increasing complexity in relation to the complaints we receive and ensure we are equipped to deal with any increase in volumes, as we successfully did in response to complaints arising from the Covid-19 pandemic."

The Strategic Plan sets out the following strategic framework and priorities:

1. Evolving and Innovating

“We will adapt and evolve our service to anticipate and respond to the changing needs and expectations of all our customers, maintaining a relentless focus on delivering fair, impartial, timely outcomes.”

Commitments to delivery include:

- Self-determined service engagement choice and self-service progress checks
- Technology solutions that enable end-to-end process digitalisation
- A receptive service that is delivered in an accessible, inclusive, easy to navigate manner
- An innovative environment for our staff, harnessing ideas to continuously improve and evolve
- A service which is agile and effective in dealing with new and emerging trends, issues and technologies

2. Connecting and Engaging

“We will connect with consumers, providers, regulatory bodies and others to help build a better understanding of what we do, and how people can best access and make use of our service should they need us.”

Commitments to delivery include:

- Initiatives to grow awareness of the FSPO and our role
- Services, processes and outcomes that are understood and a better understanding of respective roles and services provided by ourselves and stakeholders
- Information that is clear, accessible and equips consumers and their representatives
- Ongoing improvements to our service and communications
- Programmes to reach groups of consumers who may have lower levels of awareness of our services

3. Sharing and Influencing

“We will play our full part in helping to raise standards in complaints handling and resolution, and inform legislative, regulatory and policy developments so that customer complaints are prevented from arising where possible, and fairer outcomes are achieved.”

Commitments to delivery include:

- Insights and data that positively influence how financial service providers deal with complaints
- Analysis and insights to keep Government, regulators and policy makers informed of current issues and trends and highlight systemic issues
- Ongoing collaboration, communication and engagement with stakeholders
- Continuing to influence how providers design and deliver fairer products, services and systems to help prevent complaints arising

4. Developing our people, building our capability

“The development of our people and capability underpins our strategic priorities and is a crucial element of our strategic framework.”

Commitments to delivery include:

- A workforce plan that adapts to the changing environment
- Staff who are equipped with the right mix of skills and knowledge
- A culture where values are lived and foster a shared sense of purpose
- An inclusive and diverse workplace
- A positive working environment, including strong internal communications and engagement
- A learning organisation, facilitating and focusing on cross-organisational working, sharing and continuous improvement
- A positive and proactive contribution to sustainable practices to play our full part in combating climate change

The above strategic framework is supported by a detailed framework of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). Annual programmes of work are measured through these internal KPIs and reported in the FSPO’s Annual Reports. In addition, a [Service level oversight and performance delivery agreement](#) is in place with the Department of Finance and will monitor delivery of this Strategic Plan.

For further information, please contact:

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Tá an OSAP ar fáil le hagallaimh a dhéanamh trí mheán na Gaeilge.

Notes to Editor

- The Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman Act 2017 prescribes the manner by which the Strategic Plan shall be prepared and submitted to the Financial Services and Pensions Ombudsman Council and to the Minister for Finance.
- The Strategic Plan 2021 – 2024, ‘Connecting and Innovating’ is available online as [Gaeilge](#) and in [English](#). The Strategic Plan is also available in bilingual hard copy, and copies can be requested by [contacting the FSPO](#).