



*from* Sir Christopher Kelly KCB  
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Dear stakeholder

As you may be aware, Walter Merricks has decided to step down this autumn as chief ombudsman of the Financial Ombudsman Service. Since Walter established the service ten years ago, it has grown to become the world's largest ombudsman service.

I am about to start the process to appoint Walter's successor. This will include the use of search consultants and publicly advertising the position in the national press in the early autumn. Before then, I would welcome the views of our key stakeholders (consumer groups, industry bodies and regulators) about the qualities we should be seeking.

Under our Articles of Association my board is required to appoint a chief ombudsman with "the appropriate qualifications and experience to fulfil that function on such terms as the board considers consistent with the independence of the chief ombudsman". I would therefore be very interested to hear your thoughts about what constitutes relevant experience for this appointment, and the professional and personal attributes the ideal candidate should have.

In Walter Merricks we have been able to call on a mix of skills and personal qualities which have helped to build the organisation's reputation for reasonable and effective consumer dispute resolution in financial services over the past ten years. I want to ensure that we appoint a successor who will be able to build on this legacy.

I would be very interested in your views and should be grateful to hear from you by the end of August.

Yours sincerely

Sir Christopher Kelly  
**chairman**