



# Treasury Committee

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Hannah Bernard  
Head of Business Banking  
Barclays

Via email

19 April 2021

Dear Hannah,

The Treasury Committee is aware of reports, both from constituents and in the media, that small and medium-sized enterprises are facing difficulties in opening new business current accounts.

I am therefore writing to a range of large financial institutions in the UK to find out more about the current state of the business current account market.

I would welcome your answers to the following questions:

1. Have you changed your criteria for opening new business current accounts since March 2020, or are you restricting access to the application process? What changes have you made?
2. Have customers or potential customers faced longer waits for opening new business current accounts since March 2020?
3. What processes are in place for customers to complain that they have not been treated fairly with regard to opening business accounts?
4. Have you received more complaints than normal since March 2020 about customers or potential customers failing to open bank accounts?
5. Are you withdrawing or planning to withdraw from the SME market?
6. How do you ensure that you are living up to your commitments under the SME Finance Charter<sup>1</sup>?

We would be grateful for a response on these points by 19 May 2021. In line with our usual practice, we would expect to publish this letter and your response on our website.

Yours sincerely,

**Rt Hon. Mel Stride MP**  
**Chair of the Treasury Committee**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sme-finance-charter>