

Liz Barclay named as Small Business Commissioner to lead crackdown on late payments to small businesses

- Experienced business advocate and former journalist Liz Barclay appointed to head up government office tackling late payments to businesses
- appointment follows reforms to Prompt Payment Code and consultation on Commissioner's powers to help stamp out poor payment practices
- Ms Barclay will be the first woman to hold the office

The government has today (16 March) announced the appointment of Liz Barclay as Small Business Commissioner to spearhead the national effort to crackdown on delayed invoices – which cause thousands of small businesses to close every year.

Liz Barclay will be the first female Small Business Commissioner, a post which was created in 2016 to help small businesses secure the payments owed to them and to galvanise UK businesses behind a new culture of prompt payment.

Over £23.4 billion is owed in outstanding invoices to UK businesses. Some businesses wait several months before paying their suppliers, severely impacting the bottom line of many small businesses.

Small businesses account for two-thirds of UK private sector employment and more than half of business turnover. Late payments damage their income, which can hold back investment or job creation and, in the worst cases, lead to job losses and business closures.

Action to help businesses and stop this damaging practice will remain a key priority as the government looks to support small businesses and build back better from the pandemic.

Liz Barclay said:

We need a real culture change around business payments in the UK to take pressure off our phenomenal entrepreneurs. People who have already delivered goods and services have to be able to turn their attention to their next client and next order rather than chasing up late payments and worrying about their cashflow. I know from personal experience how damaging that can be to mental and emotional health.

By working with businesses and ensuring their concerns are listened to I hope to be able to deliver a payment regime that keeps cash flowing and works for everyone.

Small Business Minister Paul Scully said:

Having run small businesses for most of my professional life I know just how toxic delayed invoices can be, causing needless uncertainty as business owners chase payments which should have been made weeks or even months ago.

I thank Phillip King for his work tackling this issue as interim Small Business Commissioner and I welcome Liz Barclay to this hugely important role, driving the positive change we need to see and standing up for our hard-working small businesses.

Ms Barclay's appointment is the latest in a suite of actions which the government has taken to address the issue of late payments.

Last year, the government [consulted on new powers](#) for the Commissioner, including the power to order payments, levy fines and open investigations based on third-party information. The responses to the consultation and further proposals will be published in due course.

In January this year, the government also announced reforms to the Prompt Payment Code, a voluntary scheme whereby businesses commit to paying their partners in good time, driving further culture change and encouraging businesses to address their practices.

The government is committed to backing the UK's small businesses and has provided unprecedented support throughout the pandemic. Further support announced in the Budget earlier this month includes:

- £5 billion for new Restart Grants – a one off cash grant of up to £18,000 for hospitality, accommodation, leisure, personal care and gym businesses in England
- a new UK-wide Recovery Loan Scheme to make available loans between £25,001 and £10 million, and asset and invoice finance between £1,000 and £10 million, to help businesses of all sizes through the next stage of recovery
- a new Help to Grow scheme to offer up to 130,000 companies across the UK a digital and management boost

About Liz Barclay

Liz Barclay is a small business and consumer affairs broadcaster, producer and writer. She started her career as an adviser and then CEO with Citizens Advice before moving into radio and TV production and presentation specialising in business and consumer affairs. She is Financial Inclusion Commissioner; Chair of the BSI Consumer Forum and the Fair by Design Campaign; a non-executive Director of 2 organisations and a member of the Standards Boards of the Fundraising Regulator and The Equity Release Council. She is also an Ambassador for the Money Advice Trust and Business Debtline.

Liz works with Boards and small businesses on improving governance, trust and culture, diversity, and understanding customer behaviour. She coaches communication and presentation skills, chairs national and international conferences and has written several books on business.

Notes to editors

- Liz Barclay's term as Small Business Commissioner will begin on 1 July when she replaces current interim Commissioner Philip King
- according to 2016 research from the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), around 50,000 businesses close every year due to late payments