

The Fairbanking Mark
Mortgages Specification



Fairbanking Foundation

The Fairbanking Foundation is a charity dedicated to encouraging and helping financial providers to improve the financial well-being of their customers and as a result the UK public.

We do this through;

Research and Ratings Reports

Industry wide, independent surveys of retail products in the market or along retail themes.

Advice and Training

A programme of services to help financial services providers capitalise on Fairbanking research, coupled with the latest thinking in behavioural economics, to create products and processes that better serve customers.

Fairbanking Marks

The Fairbanking Mark certification scheme is a market leading programme accredited by the UK Accreditation Service (UKAS) for financial products in the UK. Its certification procedure is similar to bodies such as the British Standards Institute (the "kitemark").

The methodology to analyse product features and their impact on financial well-being has been developed into 9 product specifications.

- ▶ Credit Card
- ▶ Current Account with overdraft
- ▶ Current Account without overdraft
- ▶ Personal Loan
- ▶ Personal Loan (High APR)
- ▶ Regular Savings
- ▶ Childrens' Savings Accounts
- ▶ Mortgages
- ▶ Student Current Accounts

Fairbanking research, combined with industry expert input, has identified drivers of financial well-being and identified money management practices that help customers positively change behaviour. These findings have generated benchmarks for products against which to measure the customer financial well-being that the product offers.



As part of a Fairbanking Mark assessment, we will work with you to identify, validate and confirm whether your products meet our functional standards and, if they do, the Fairbanking Mark will be granted in either a three, four or five star version. As part of our assessment process we survey, either via telephone or online, your customers' reactions to specific features.

In addition to the features outlined, we also consider a number of fairness factors to ensure that the product adheres to the Foundation's principle of fairness. These factors vary by product but will include a review of your product specific complaints, ensuring interest charges and fees are at an acceptable market level and that there are no restrictive practices relating to the product.

The product features outlined in this specification form the basis for our Mortgages Fairbanking Mark assessment. To evaluate the potential for a Fairbanking Mark on your product, please either specify your answer by selecting Yes or No to the questions adding any relevant comments and submit the form. To contact our team to see how we can support you, please email us at info@fairbanking.org.uk.

Product Specification: Mortgages

An application can include all mortgages being offered by the mortgage lender if they have the features and there are no issues relating to fairness factors. The term product relates to all features of the product including the advisory service by which it is sold. It will include mortgages sold through intermediaries if the features are available through that channel.

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1. Assisting the customer to understand all expenditures involved in the house purchase/remortgage

This section considers features that help the customer understand all housing related expenses before and after the purchase of a new property, including unexpected costs. The purpose is to ensure that as far as possible the customer can manage both mortgage payments and other expenditure after a move.

- 1.1** The product provides the customer with a clear indication of the amount of all possible costs involved in the house purchase (arrangement, application, valuation, survey, legal, stamp duty, estate agent etc.).
- Yes
- No

Comments:

- 1.2** The product encourages the customer to consider possible interest rate increases in a way that the customer is confident that they have planned for it (e.g. alternative income or a buffer on their income).
- Yes
- No

Comments:

- 1.3** The product provides the customer with the ability to consider all post-purchase regular running costs. This is particularly important for first time buyers, in a way that encourages customers to check if they are unsure (e.g. do not know the cost of utilities).
- Yes
- No

Comments:

- 1.4** The product enables the customer to consider post-purchase costs (e.g. repairs, furniture, decorating, extensions etc.) in order to enable the customer to understand what they can afford at that point; this may be followed up with post-move communications or reminders.
- Yes
- No

Comments:

1.5 The product encourages the customer of the need to have an emergency/ contingency fund for unexpected expenditure? (This should be followed up with post-move communications or reminders).

Yes

No

Comments:

2. Enabling the customer to make prepayments and underpayments

This section considers features that encourage the customer to prepay when they can afford to do so in order to reduce mortgage costs and vulnerability. It includes features that enable underpayment or payment holiday following a prepayment in order to assist with a change in circumstance.

2.1 The product enables the customer to make early payment of some of the mortgage without charge and customers are aware of the feature.

Yes

No

Comments:

2.2 The product allows some underpayment or payment holiday as a result of having made prepayments and customers are aware of the feature.

Yes

No

Comments:

3. Enabling the customer to consider insurance arrangements

This section includes features that encourage the customer to take out appropriate insurance at the same time as the life event of moving home and to periodically review insurance arrangements, particularly in relation to a life event.

3.1 The product encourages the customer to consider insurance needs in a way that leads to some customers seeking advice to ensure they have adequate protection in case of unexpected life events.

Yes

No

Comments:

3.2 The product encourages the customer to periodically review insurance arrangements (e.g. buildings, contents, life, illness, income protection, which could be linked to a change in circumstance).

Yes

No

Comments:

4. Enabling the customer to receive support for a temporary change in circumstance or in financial difficulty at the earliest opportunity

This section includes features that support a customer that finds themselves facing a temporary change in circumstance or financial difficulty on a mortgage and likely to miss a payment or having missed a payment.

4.1 The product has ensured that the customer is regularly made aware that it is likely to be in their interest to contact the lender at the earliest opportunity, even prior to a payment being missed.

Yes

No

Comments:

4.2 The customer in need of support is clear about the options available to them (e.g. adding arrears to the mortgage balance, part-repayment, interest-only, term extension and payment holiday).

Yes

No

Comments:

4.3 The customer is given sufficient time to consider the options, seek advice as necessary and take a decision, during this time the collection process is suspended within legal constraints.

Yes

No

Comments:

4.4 The customer is referred to an independent agency (e.g. StepChange) where necessary in such a way that the customer does follow this up rather than postponing contact.

Yes

No

Comments:

4.5 The product follows up the customer to confirm that the proposed actions are being taken and providing support to the customer.

Yes

No

Comments:

5. Encouraging customers to have a plan for repaying an interest only mortgage

This section includes features designed to ensure customers that have moved to an interest only mortgage have considered (prior to retirement) a method of repayment. The approach will have been developed with a view to ensuring understanding and future action by customers.

5.1 The product reminds the customer of the need to repay a mortgage in such a way that the customer understands the consequence of only paying interest; i.e. that the mortgage is not reducing and the property will not become owned by them.

Yes

No

Comments:

5.2 The product encourages the customer to commit to a voluntary plan for how to repay a mortgage that has become interest-only.

Yes

No

Comments:

5.3 The product periodically (e.g. annually) reminds the customer of the plan and gives the opportunity to consider whether it is still appropriate in a way that some customers take action.

Yes

No

Comments:

6. Encouraging customers to take action in relation to retirement

This section includes features designed to ensure customers who are approaching or after retirement are considering potential action.

6.1 The product has options or other features that will encourage the customer to consider making adjustment prior to or following retirement.

Yes

No

Comments: