



Rt Hon Mr Frank Field MP
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Dear Mr Field

Thank you for your request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which our Information Access Team received on 20 November 2013. I am replying as the Director responsible for Policy, Risk and Research.

In your letter you ask us to provide 'recorded information on the distributional impact of pay-to-use ATMs in the United Kingdom; whether an assessment has been made of the ease with which consumers who may wish to use free-to-use ATMs including customers in areas affected by social or economic deprivation, can access them; and the ease with which consumers who pay to use ATMs can change the location from where they are able to obtain cash'.

We unfortunately do not hold the information you have requested as the FCA has not undertaken any assessments on the distribution impact of ease of access to ATMs. The FCA does not have rules requiring banks to provide access to ATMs to individual customers, as ATM access remains a commercial decision for each individual bank. Although we have not ourselves conducted an assessment in this area, you may also wish to note that the Payments Council has undertaken both qualitative and quantitative research on access to cash. Information about that is available on the Payments Council website:

http://www.paymentscouncil.org.uk/media_centre/press_releases/-/page/2451/

We do recognise that financial services are an essential part of everyday life in the UK. People who face difficulties accessing and using financial services experience real detriment, both in terms of the monetary costs and the social costs of financial exclusion.

Under our competition objective, the FCA 'may have regard' to the ease with which consumers can access financial services. This provides a basis for promoting access when this is consistent with strengthening competition. While we have discretion under this 'access clause' whether to act or not, it is important to note that substantial policy interventions that have a focus on enhancing access, and which require economic and social policy trade-offs to be made, remain the role of the Government rather than of the FCA. Where we detect issues

which require a wider social policy solution, we would report these to Government for their consideration and action.

I trust that this information is helpful.

*Yours sincerely
C Woolard.*

Christopher Woolard
Director of Policy, Risk and Research