

## Transparency Task Force Community Interest Company form

### Section A: The community, or part of the community that this company will benefit:

*The company's activities will provide benefit to...*

Consumers of financial products and services, such as pensions, investments and bank accounts.

## Section B: How will the company's activities benefit the community?

<b>Activities</b> (Tell us here what the company is being set up to do)	<b>How will the activity benefit the community?</b>
<p><b>The Transparency Task Force exists to help drive positive, progressive and purposeful finance reform for the benefit of consumers. Our activities fall into two categories:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. We raise awareness and build support for the idea that the financial services industry needs to be more transparent and fair</b></li> <li><b>2. We campaign to change the financial services industry for the better</b></li> </ol>	<p>People rely on financial products and services to help provide financial security for themselves and their families – in their day-to-day lives and for their future. But the people who rely on these products and services typically know a lot less about them than the people who run them. Because of this, we think the financial services industry has a responsibility to behave transparently and fairly. When it behaves transparently, consumers will see whether or not they're getting value for money.</p> <p>However, in general the industry has been too opaque. There have been too many issues such as hidden investment charges, unethical practices, misleading small print and miss-selling. At best, these issues are unfair. At worst, they can ruin people's futures.</p> <p>The people who make up the Transparency Task Force are holding the industry to account and working to reform the way it operates, to make it better for consumers. Making things like costs, services, and products more transparent will give consumers better and fairer outcomes.</p> <p>Our work will have a positive by-product, too. The financial industry has suffered extensive reputational damage. Our work will help the industry rebuild trust and confidence with consumers.</p>
<p><b>1. We raise awareness and build support for the idea that the financial services industry needs to be more transparent and fair</b></p>	
<p><b>We run Transparency events</b>            Our events focus on specific subjects, e.g. 'How can we make costs and charges more transparent?' and 'How can we rebuild trust and confidence?' We invite speakers and facilitate discussions.</p>	<p>These events bring together academics, policymakers, trade bodies, regulators, banks, insurance companies, pension firms and more. They galvanise support for the idea that the industry needs reforming – and help to identify what needs fixing and how it can be fixed.</p>
<p><b>We publish the Transparency Times</b>            Our online magazine goes out to over 10,000 people each month. It's full of thought leadership pieces, e.g. why consumers must be told whether their investments include high-carbon assets.</p>	<p>Our magazine helps the public and progressively-minded people in the industry share ideas. This raises awareness, highlights individuals and organisations that set a good example, and helps focus our campaigning activities to reform the industry for the benefit of consumers.</p>
<p><b>We publicise our pro-consumer agenda in the media</b>            From pieces in the Financial Times to appearing on the Radio 4 programme <i>The Transparency Detectives</i>, we tell the consumer's side of the story in the media. We also interrogate information that's put out by the industry, calling out any falsities.</p>	<p>Most articles in the press are from the point of view of the financial services giants – they spend large sums to get their message across. Barely anyone is telling the other side of the story. For instance, an industry association's press release said there was no such thing as hidden charges. We called them out. We wrote articles and comments urging them to come clean on charges. Doing things like this helps build support to change the industry from the inside.</p>

<p><b>We are building a network of Ambassadors</b> Our Ambassadors are individuals that are happy to be seen to be actively supporting our work.</p>	<p>Our Ambassadors are highly credible individuals and many of them are well-known. They align with our mission to help drive positive, progressive and purposeful finance reform for the benefit of the consumer. By having their support and involvement we have greater profile and presence within the financial services industry. As such, we can champion the consumer's interests more effectively.</p>
<p><b>We award Transparency Trophies</b> We have awarded 26 so far.</p>	<p>We award Transparency Trophies to individuals and organisations within the financial services sector that are making a positive contribution to improving the way the industry operates. By awarding the trophies we recognise those who are helping to make a positive difference to consumers. This in turn encourages others to do the same.</p>
<p><b>We make useful connections between people and organisations</b></p>	<p>We are at the epicentre of an ever-expanding network of contacts that we are systematically creating. As such we are frequently able to introduce people to other campaigning and advocacy groups and thereby enhance the effectiveness of organisations with similar objectives to our own</p>
<p><b>2. We campaign to change the financial services industry for the better</b></p>	
<p><b>We create special interest groups that work together to bring about change</b> Our special interest groups tackle specific sections of the industry – such as foreign exchange, pensions, FinTech and communications. Each group is made up of subject matter experts with the knowledge and expertise to identify what problems need to be addressed in their part of the market. They agree campaign objectives, engage with regulators and influence the rule-makers to make positive change happen.</p>	<p>There are already twenty-one groups. Here are just two examples:</p> <p><b>The Anti-Scams group</b> works to keep savers and their savings safer. The FCA's Financial Lives report suggested that 107,000 people between 55-64 could have been pension scam victims in 2017. Our group liaises with policymakers to help reduce the chance of people being scammed, and calls on the industry to take more responsibility for people who have been scammed. The group also gives scam victims moral and technical support about how to manage their situation.</p> <p><b>The Costs and Charges group</b> works to make it easier for consumers to understand how much they pay the companies they use to invest their savings. The group's work helped lead to the Work and Pensions Select Committee's inquiry into hidden costs and charges in pensions and investments. We hope, as a result, regulators will put better rules in place to make financial services more transparent about how much they charge. This will help the public understand whether they're getting value for money. If they're not, they'll be better placed to make decisions about switching from one investment company to another – putting downward pressure on costs and charges. This could make a big difference to their future – they might have significantly more savings to retire on.</p>
<p><b>We do research so we have evidence to support our campaign work</b></p>	<p>Having facts and figures to support our argument makes us more likely to be heard – and more able to credibly champion the consumer's point of view. For example, we identified all the costs and charges pension savers were exposed to, and this research helped us argue that investment companies need to make charges more transparent. This in turn led to the inquiry we mentioned</p>

	above – which could help make millions of consumers more financially secure in their retirement.
<p><b>We respond to consultations to make sure regulators hear the consumer's point of view</b></p> <p>We respond to relevant regulator, industry body and government consultations – with thoughts from our special interest groups.</p>	<p>Almost all consultation responses are from industry organisations – whose primary objective is to maximise their profit. Barely any responses are from pro-consumer groups. For example, the FCA's Discussion Paper asked whether financial companies should have a legal responsibility to look after the interests of customers. Several responses were from industry organisations saying 'no'. Our response was the opposite: we made sure the consumer's voice was heard.</p>
<p><b>We convene special meetings with the financial regulators</b></p>	<p>By convening special meetings with the financial regulators, we are able to speak up on behalf of consumers' interests. For example, we have convened special meetings with both the Financial Conduct Authority and the Bank of England's Climate Hub about the need for reforms within the asset management industry so that people's money is more likely to be invested in a responsible and sustainable way.</p>

**If the company makes any surplus, it will be used for...**

We don't anticipate any surplus. But if we do make any surplus, we'll distribute it according to the rules of the CIC.