

23 March 2026

Final report by the Complaints Commissioner**Complaint number 202500595***The complaint*

1. On 12 December 2025, you submitted a complaint to my office about the FCA, and I set it out below.

Element One: When you asked how to cancel your firm's permission to conduct regulated activity ("**permissions**"), you were allegedly told that you could do this via email. You sent the FCA an email, but the FCA still charged your firm the annual authorisation fee.

Outcome: not upheld. The FCA states that it does not have evidence of a telephone call or email in which you were told you could apply to cancel your firm's permissions via email. You have also not provided evidence. The FCA also cannot find evidence of receiving an email from you applying to cancel your firm's permissions, and you have not provided any evidence. Because your firm's permissions had not been cancelled before the deadline of 31 March 2025, I consider that the FCA acted reasonably in charging the annual authorisation fee.

Element Two: Your firm's permissions have now been cancelled but you are still being asked to pay a £250 admin fee.

Outcome: not upheld. At the time when your firm was issued with the admin fee, it was still authorised, because you had not cancelled its permissions before the cut-off date of 31 March 2025. An authorised firm is required to submit a Firm Details Attestation ("**FDA**"), and I consider the FCA acted reasonably in issuing the admin fee for late submission of the FDA.

Background

2. 31 March 2025 was the deadline after which your firm had to pay the FCA the annual authorisation fee for permission to conduct regulated activity (“**permissions**”).
3. On 28 August 2025, after issuing three reminders, the FCA issued your firm with a £250 admin fee for failure to submit an FDA by the 26 August 2025 deadline.
4. On the same day you called the FCA to query the fee, asserting that you had sent an email three to four weeks previously to cancel your firm’s permissions. You were told that it was not possible to cancel permissions via email, and that the admin fee would not be refunded because your firm was still authorised. You were advised that an application to cancel permissions had to be made via the Connect system.
5. On the same day you wrote to the FCA Fees Helpline that your firm was stopping conducting regulated activity, and consequently you wanted to cancel its permissions and have the £876.15 annual registration fee refunded.
6. On 1 September 2025 you were advised that because your firm was still authorised on 31 March 2025, it was liable for the annual fee.
7. On 2 September 2025 the FCA called you and said that although you believed you had submitted an application to cancel your firm’s permission, it was still in draft form on the Connect system. You were given help to complete the application, and you explained that you had last conducted regulated activity two months ago. This was during the period in which your firm was authorised, and the FCA confirmed that the annual fee was still payable.
8. On the same day you submitted an application to cancel your firm’s permissions.
9. On 5 September 2025 the FCA told you that the application was complete and had been approved, and that it would update the Financial Services Register accordingly.
10. On 16 October 2025 you complained to the FCA, specifically:
 - a. The FCA wrongly told you in a telephone call that you could cancel your firm’s permissions via email.

- b. Despite sending an email to cancel your firm's permissions, your firm was invoiced for the annual authorisation fee.
 - c. You did not know why your firm was charged an admin fee for submitting the FDA late.
11. On 11 November 2025 the FCA asked you to provide information to support your complaint, including evidence that you were told that you could submit an application to cancel permissions via email, but you did not provide anything.
12. On 9 December 2025 the FCA issued its Decision Letter and did not uphold your complaint, stating:
- a. There was no evidence that you were told in a telephone call that you could cancel your firm's permissions via email, or of any email from you asking to cancel permissions.
 - b. The application to cancel permissions was submitted on 2 September 2025, after the 31 March 2025 deadline for cancelling permissions and your firm had been conducting regulated activity two months before the application was submitted.
 - c. You had been sent three reminders that the FDA had to be submitted by 26 August 2025, your application to cancel your firm's permissions was only approved on 5 September 2025.
13. On 12 December 2025 you complained to my office.

Analysis

Element One: When you asked how to cancel your firm's permission to conduct regulated activity ("permissions"), you were allegedly told that you could do this via email. You sent the FCA an email, but the FCA still charged your firm the annual authorisation fee.

14. The FCA has stated that it has no evidence of telling you, either by telephone or email, that you could apply to cancel your firm's permissions via email. I note that you have also not provided any evidence to support your position.

15. The FCA has also stated that it has no evidence of receiving an email from you asking to cancel your firm's permissions. I note that you have also provided no evidence and did not do so when the FCA asked you to in November 2025.
16. If you do have any evidence of sending that email, I suggest you provide it to the FCA, because if you did send it and received no reply, I consider that the FCA should have told you that you could only apply to cancel your firm's permissions via the Connect system.
17. Consequently, because your firm's permissions had not been formally cancelled before 31 March 2025, your firm was liable to pay the annual authorisation fee. I also note that you told the FCA in September 2025, when applying to cancel your firm's permissions, that your firm had been conducting regulated activity two months previously.
18. I consider that the FCA acted reasonably in issuing your firm with the £876.15 annual authorisation fee, and for these reasons I do not uphold Element One of your complaint.

Element Two: Your firm's permissions have now been cancelled but you are still being asked to pay a £250 admin fee.

19. The evidence shows that the deadline for you to submit your firm's FDA was 26 August 2025, and that the FCA, as a courtesy, sent you three reminders across June, July and August 2025.
20. At this, as laid out above and until the FCA approved the cancellation on 5 September 2025, your firm was still authorised and conducted regulated activity. Until the FCA approves an application to cancel permissions, firms are obliged to submit FDAs.
21. In 2024 the FCA told you in an email that if firms did not comply with regulatory requirements, it might take enforcement action, and that if a firm misses a deadline to submit a form, this can lead to a £250 admin fee.
22. Consequently, I consider that the FCA acted reasonably in issuing the £250 admin fee and for the above reasons, I do not uphold Element Two of your complaint.

The Complaints Commissioner

Complaints Commissioner

23 March 2026