

Asset Purchase Facility

Quarterly Report 2017 Q3



BANK OF ENGLAND



Asset Purchase Facility

The Bank of England Asset Purchase Facility Fund was established as a subsidiary of the Bank of England on 30 January 2009, in order to fulfil the remit of the Chancellor of the Exchequer given to the Bank on 19 January 2009⁽¹⁾ and detailed in an exchange of letters with the then Governor on 29 January 2009.⁽²⁾ This remit was subsequently expanded to enable the Fund to be used as a monetary policy tool, at the request of the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), as detailed in the exchange of letters on 17 February and 3 March 2009.⁽³⁾

The then Governor noted in his letter of 29 January 2009, 'it is important that the Asset Purchase Facility (APF) is operated in an open and transparent manner. The Bank will publish a quarterly report on the transactions as part of the facility, shortly after the end of each quarter'. This report covers the three months to 29 September 2017. More information on the Committee's monetary policy decisions can be found in the *Inflation Report*.⁽⁴⁾

The Bank's Executive Directors for Markets and for Monetary Analysis and Research & Statistics are Directors of the Fund. The Directors make recommendations on the assets to be purchased to the Governor, who decides after consulting with Deputy Governors. The Fund and the Bank are indemnified by the Treasury from any losses arising out of or in connection with the Facility.⁽⁵⁾

HM Treasury announced arrangements to transfer gilt coupon payments received by the APF, net of interest costs and other expenses, to the Exchequer on 9 November 2012. These arrangements are detailed in an exchange of letters between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the then Governor.⁽⁶⁾

Before 4 August 2016, in line with the MPC's decisions,⁽⁷⁾ the APF had been authorised to purchase £375 billion of high-quality assets financed by the creation of central bank reserves. These purchases were completed on 31 October 2012 and the stock was thereafter maintained at £375 billion, through reinvestment of cash flows associated with the maturities of gilts owned by the APF, until 4 August 2016.

On 4 August 2016 the MPC voted to introduce a package of measures to support the UK economy. A Term Funding Scheme (TFS) was introduced to provide term funding to banks at rates close to Bank Rate, with the aim of reinforcing the transmission of Bank Rate cuts to those interest rates actually faced by households and businesses in the United Kingdom. Lending under the TFS is financed by the creation of central bank reserves and borrowing by counterparties is collateralised. A new Corporate Bond Purchase Scheme (CBPS) was set up to purchase high-quality private sector assets, financed by the creation of central bank reserves. The CBPS was authorised to purchase up to £10 billion worth of sterling-denominated bonds of firms making a material contribution to the UK economy, subject to assessment against criteria designed to limit the risks involved in holding corporate debt.⁽⁸⁾ Also, the target for the stock of purchases of UK government bonds, financed by the creation of central bank reserves, was increased by £60 billion to £435 billion. These actions were intended to boost the supply of money and credit in order to raise the rate of growth of nominal spending to a level consistent with meeting the inflation target in the medium term. The agreement to increase the size and broaden the composition of the APF to cover these new measures on a sustainable basis was set out in an exchange of letters between the Governor and the Chancellor on 4 August 2016.⁽⁹⁾ Operations to increase the stocks of APF gilt and CBPS purchases to the levels set by the MPC in August 2016 were completed in 2017 Q1 and Q2 respectively.

At its meeting ending on 2 August 2017, the MPC stated that, consistent with its decision to maintain the stock of CBPS assets at £10 billion, it expected to reinvest cash flows associated with any reduction in the stock of CBPS assets back into eligible corporate bonds.⁽¹⁰⁾ That would take place once the required reinvestment had reached a sufficient size to allow an auction programme to be conducted. The MPC also voted unanimously to close the drawdown period for the Term Funding Scheme on 28 February 2018, as envisaged when the scheme was introduced.

The APF may also be used to support financial stability by intervening in credit markets that are not functioning normally. Formerly, the Commercial Paper Facility⁽¹¹⁾ (CPF), the Secured Commercial Paper Facility⁽¹²⁾ (SCPF) and the Corporate Bond Secondary Market Scheme⁽¹³⁾ (CBSMS) were used for that purpose. The CPF was closed on 15 November 2011 and the SCPF and CBSMS were closed on 4 August 2016.

(1) The Chancellor's statement is available at http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130129110402/http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/press_05_09.htm.

(2) The exchange of letters is available at http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/ck_letter_boe290109.pdf and www.bankofengland.co.uk/markets/apfgovletter090129.pdf.

(3) The exchange of letters is available at www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetarypolicy/pdf/govletter090305.pdf and http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20091204142322/http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/chxletter_boe050309.pdf.

(4) The August *Inflation Report* is available at www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/Documents/inflationreport/2017/aug.pdf.

(5) For more details see www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/Documents/other/markets/apf/boeapannualreport1707.pdf.

(6) The exchange of letters can be found at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/194038/chx_letter_091112.pdf and www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetarypolicy/Documents/pdf/govletter121109.pdf.

(7) For more history of MPC asset purchase decisions, see www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetarypolicy/Documents/mpcvoting.xlsx.

(8) Eligibility criteria for issuers and securities were published in a Market Notice on 4 August 2016. For more details see www.bankofengland.co.uk/markets/Documents/marketnotice160804apfcbps.pdf.

(9) The exchange of letters can be found at www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetarypolicy/Documents/pdf/govletter040816apf.pdf and www.bankofengland.co.uk/monetarypolicy/Documents/pdf/chancellorletter040816apf.pdf.

(10) Monetary Policy Summary and Minutes of the Monetary Policy Committee meeting ending on 2 August 2017 available at www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/minutes/Documents/mpc/pdf/2017/aug.pdf.

(11) For more details see www.bankofengland.co.uk/markets/apf/cp/index.htm.

(12) For more details see www.bankofengland.co.uk/markets/apf/securedcpf/index.htm.

(13) For more details see www.bankofengland.co.uk/markets/apf/corporatebond/index.htm.

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Operations

Table A summarises the stock of APF gilt and corporate bond purchases, and lending under the TFS, in 2017 Q3, reported on a settlement date basis.

Table A Stock of APF holdings by type (£ millions)

Week ending ^(a)	Gilts ^(b)	Corporate Bond Purchase Scheme ^(c)	Term Funding Scheme ^(d)
2017 Q2 ^(e)	434,961	9,991	69,259
5 July 2017	434,961	9,991	75,464
12 July 2017	434,961	9,991	75,489
19 July 2017	434,961	9,991	75,664
26 July 2017	434,961	9,991	78,318
2 August 2017	434,961	9,991	79,592
9 August 2017	434,961	9,991	79,639
16 August 2017	434,961	9,991	80,378
23 August 2017	434,961	9,991	82,743
30 August 2017	428,448	9,991	82,855
6 September 2017	430,698	9,991	82,447
13 September 2017	430,456	9,991	82,627
20 September 2017	433,831	9,991	84,327
27 September 2017	434,956	9,991	84,546

Source: Bank of England.

- (a) The outstanding amount in each facility is reported on a settlement date basis.
 (b) The overall stock of APF gilt purchases, less redemptions, valued at initial purchase price.
 (c) The overall stock of APF Corporate Bond Purchase Scheme purchases, less redemptions, valued at initial purchase price.
 (d) The total amount of loans made through the Term Funding Scheme, less repayments.
 (e) 2017 Q2 measured as the amount outstanding as at 28 June 2017.

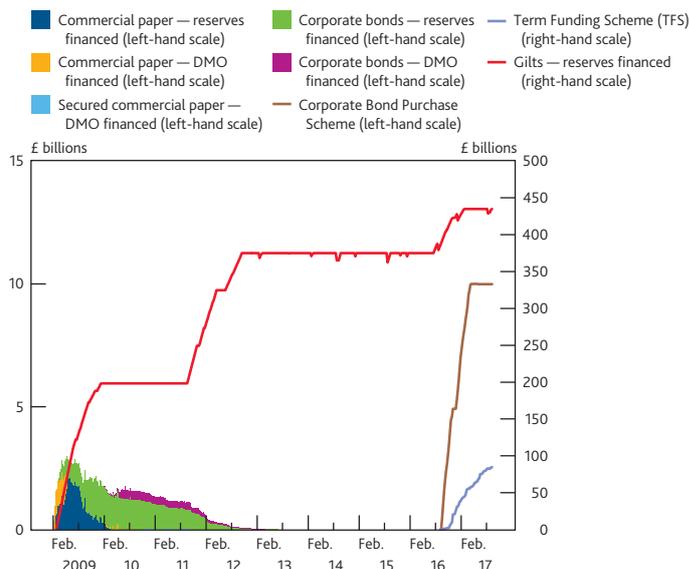
No corporate bond purchases took place during the quarter. The stock of corporate bonds held by the APF at the end of 2017 Q3, valued at initial purchase price and net of sales and redemptions was £9.991 billion.⁽¹⁾

The total amount of loans made through the Term Funding Scheme during the quarter, less repayments, was £15.29 billion bringing the total to £84.546 billion.

During Q3 the APF made £10.1 billion of gilt purchases, to reinvest the cash flows associated with the maturities on 25 August and 7 September 2017 of gilts owned by the APF.

Chart 1 shows the cumulative net value of APF transactions by type between the establishment of the Fund and 29 September 2017. As at 29 September 2017, cumulative assets purchased and amounts lent, net of sales, redemptions and repayments, totalled £529.5 billion.

Chart 1 Cumulative net value of APF transactions by type, including TFS drawings^(a)



Source: Bank of England.

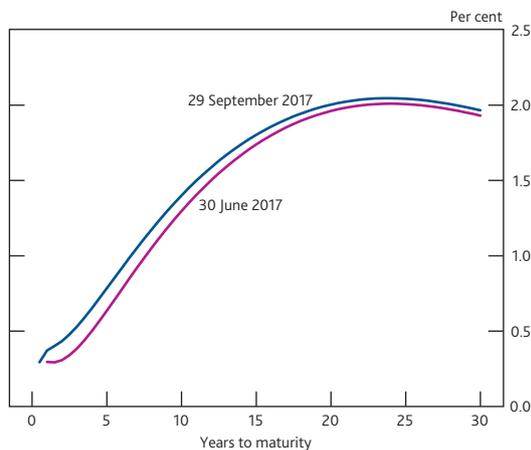
(a) Data based on settled transactions.

Conditions in UK government and corporate bond markets

UK government bond market

During 2017 Q3, nominal gilt yields rose on average, by around 8 basis points (**Chart 2**).

Chart 2 UK nominal spot rates



Sources: Bloomberg, Tradeweb and Bank calculations.

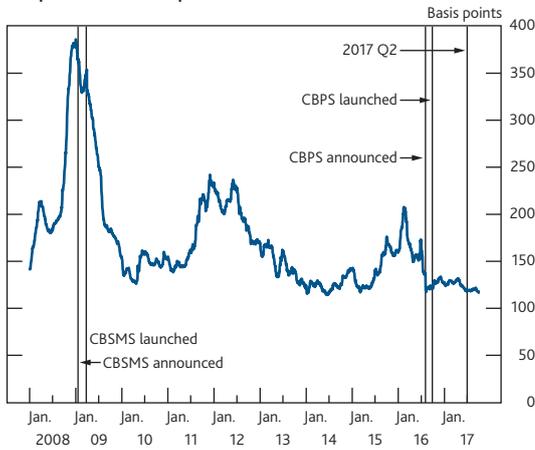
Gilts purchased via the Facility continue to be made available for on-lending to the market through the gilt lending arrangement with the Debt Management Office (DMO).⁽²⁾ The average daily aggregate value of gilts lent by the APF to the DMO during the three months to 29 September 2017 was £1.420 billion.

- (1) There are a number of factors that could result in a reduction of stock, such as redemptions, mandatory or voluntary corporate actions, a material change in an issuer's risk profile and/or a material change in the eligibility of a given issuer. The Bank reserves the right to sell bonds in the event that a given issuer no longer meets the conditions for eligibility enumerated in previous Market Notices.
 (2) For more details see www.dmo.gov.uk/docs/gilts/press/sa060809b.pdf.

UK corporate bond market

Sterling investment-grade non-financial corporate bond spreads were little changed in 2017 Q3 (**Chart 3**).

Chart 3 Sterling investment-grade non-financial corporate bond spreads^(a)

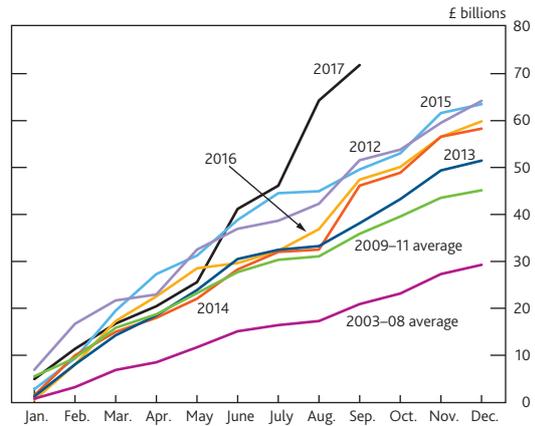


Sources: BofA Merrill Lynch Global Research, used with permission, and Bank calculations.

(a) Spread over government rates, adjusted for the embedded option values of certain bonds (option-adjusted spread).

Gross issuance of corporate bonds by UK private non-financial corporations (PNFCs) in 2017 Q3 was higher than in 2016 Q3 and higher than the 2003–08 Q3 average (**Chart 4**).

Chart 4 Cumulative gross issuance of bonds by UK PNFCs^(a)



Sources: Thomson Reuters Deals Business Intelligence and Bank calculations.

(a) Issuance by UK private non-financial corporations (PNFCs) or their financing vehicles. Includes investment-grade and non-investment grade bonds and medium-term notes. Data are subject to periodic revisions. Lines for 2003–08 and 2009–11 show averages over the respective periods.

More information on recent market conditions can be found in *Inflation Reports*⁽¹⁾ and Minutes of the MPC meetings.⁽²⁾

(1) See www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/Pages/inflationreport/default.aspx.
 (2) See www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/minutes/pages/mpc/default.aspx.