

We'll starve ourselves until the banks give us justice: Grandma, 74, joins five small business owners on hunger strike against the lenders they blame for financial ruin

- Marjorie Armstrong will start her protest outside Danske Bank in central Belfast
- All the protesters ran small businesses they claim collapsed due to mistreatment
- Some of the six have lost – or face losing – their homes as lenders chased debts

By [William Turvill For The Mail On Sunday](#)

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A 74-year-old grandmother is among six protesters threatening to go on hunger strike this week outside banks they blame for wrecking their lives.

Marjorie Armstrong, an ex-ballet teacher who has two daughters and six grandchildren, says she will start her protest outside a branch of Danske Bank in central Belfast from 7am on Tuesday.

All the protesters ran small businesses they claim collapsed due to mistreatment by their lenders, including Lloyds and CYBG, the owner of the Clydesdale and Yorkshire banks.

Some of the six have lost – or face losing – their homes as their lenders chased debts.



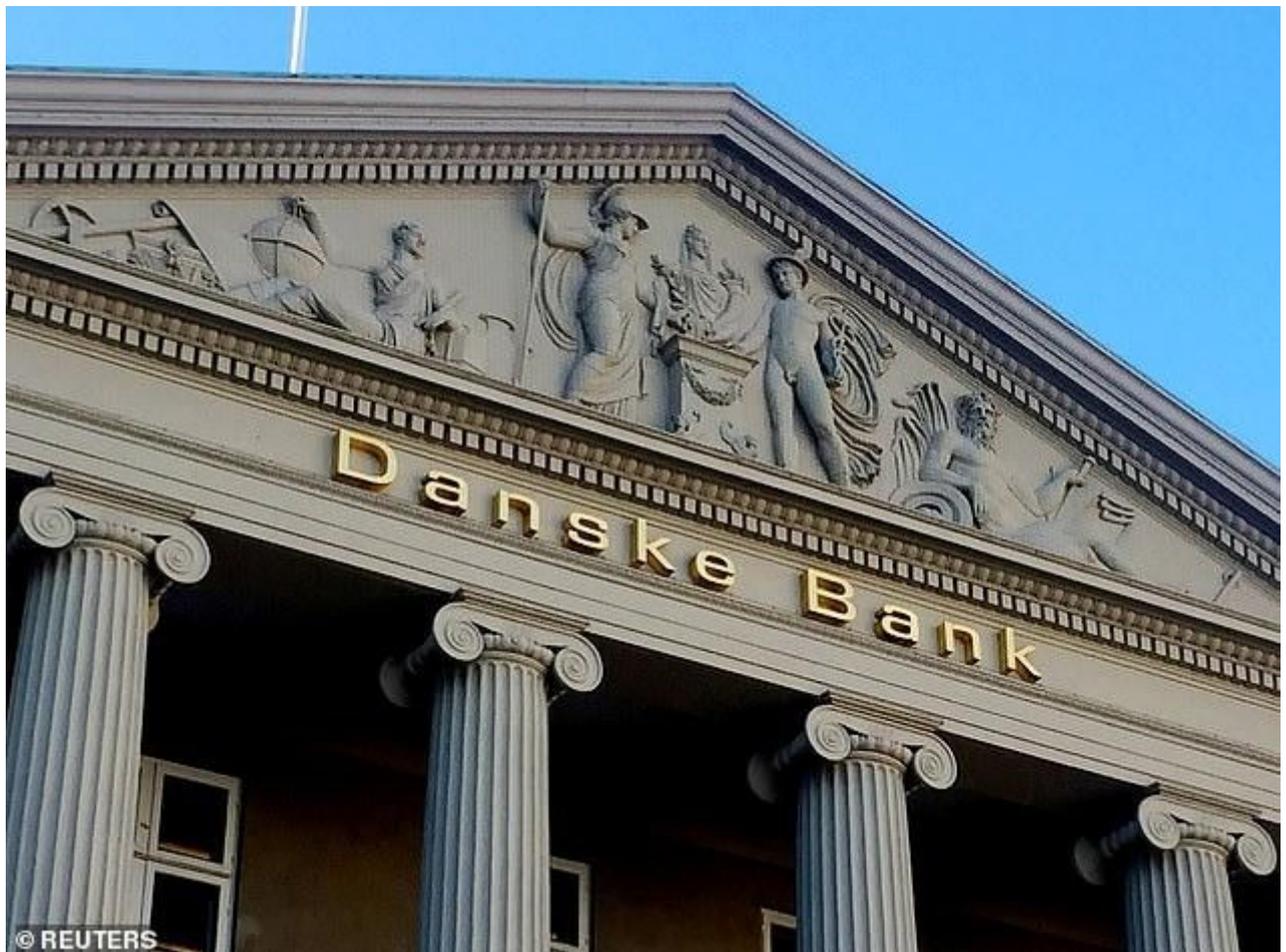
Marjorie and Hubert Armstrong (pictured) from Belfast built up a successful property development business but one of their deals went badly wrong

They say they will camp outside branches in Manchester, Bristol, Glasgow, Cardiff and Belfast and go without food, drinking only water.

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They are among thousands of entrepreneurs whose businesses and livelihoods were destroyed in the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis as banks sought to claw back debts on loans they had handed out.

Many of the customers were made bankrupt and lost businesses they have worked hard to build up.



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A spokesman for the Denmark-based Danske Bank said it was talking with the Armstrongs, adding: 'We strongly disagree with the allegations, but we are keen to find a resolution to their complaint' (file picture)

Royal Bank of Scotland, Lloyds and CYBG have come under intense scrutiny over their treatment of small business customers, with campaigners pushing the Government to set up a tribunal so alleged victims can seek compensation.

Mrs Armstrong volunteered to set up a tent and go on hunger strike between 7am and 7pm each day instead of her husband Hubert, 76, because he has health issues.

The couple built up a successful property development business. But one of their deals went badly wrong – for which they blame their bank and its surveyor – and in 2010 their debts were called in.

The couple now live on benefits after being made bankrupt and losing their family home.

'I want justice,' Mrs Armstrong told The Mail on Sunday. 'I have lived a life of hell for the past nine years. No one can give me back those years. Somebody must listen. Something must be done.'

A spokesman for the Denmark-based Danske said it was talking with the Armstrongs, adding: 'We strongly disagree with the allegations, but we are keen to find a resolution to their complaint.'

Trevor Mealham, 49, plans to start a hunger strike outside Lloyds Bank's business support unit in Bristol on the same day.

Mr Mealham, who lives with his partner Tracey and their son William, nine, in Ashford, Kent, ran a growing technology business that he says ran into trouble after Lloyds withdrew a £200,000 loan offer.

He said: 'William thinks it's normal not having carpets and having walls that are not plastered and holes in the ceilings. Because that's all he's ever known.'

He said Lloyds had launched a legal action to seize his home, adding: 'They want to throw us out on the street.'

The bank declined to comment.