

The complaint

Mr B's complaint is about credit limit increases, and the interest and charges applied to his credit card account with Vanquis Bank Limited.

What happened

- Mr B opened a credit card account with Vanquis in October 2010.
- Mr B says he took advantage of any credit limit increases offered by Vanquis in order to get more money. But he says this meant he had difficulty in managing the card ever since it's been open.
- Mr B wasn't happy about the way his account had been managed and complained to Vanquis. He asked for a refund of all interest and over-limit fees that had been charged to his account.
- Vanquis said Mr B was out of time to complain about some of the credit limit increases and charges. It reviewed the charges on his account from September 2014 and concluded they had been applied correctly in line with Mr B's account terms. Vanquis said it had frozen interest and charges at times on the account. So it didn't uphold his complaint.
- Mr B didn't agree and brought his complaint to us.
- After investigating, our investigator concluded Mr B's complaint about the events that happened on his account before September 2014 was out of time.
- With regard to the events that happened after September 2014, our investigator concluded Mr B's complaint shouldn't be upheld because they found Vanquis had applied the charges fairly and in line with his account terms. They also concluded Vanquis had treated Mr B positively and sympathetically when it had been aware he was in financial difficulty.
- Mr B doesn't agree, he says the charges have had a big impact on his life.

The complaint has now been passed to me to decide.

What I've decided – and why

I've considered all the available evidence and arguments to decide what's fair and reasonable in the circumstances of this complaint.

Having done so, I've decided not to uphold this complaint for these reasons:

- Our investigator has already explained why we can't consider the charges and limit increases which happened more than 6 years ago on Mr B's account, so I won't go into detail about that again here. And I can't see any further limit increases after September 2014. So instead I'll focus on how Vanquis' administered Mr B's account from September 2014 onwards.
- Vanquis has provided a full breakdown of the charges applied to Mr B's account. Mr B hasn't specifically said which charges he feels were unfair, so I've looked at all the charges applied to his account. I can see the charges relate to times Mr B exceeded his credit limit, made a late payment, or missed a payment.
- I've next considered the terms and conditions of Mr B's account to see if the circumstances I've mentioned above were clearly set out. The terms of Mr B's account state, under "*Key Information*", "*4.1 If you breach this agreement we may charge you for the following administrative costs...('Late Payment Charge')...('Over Limit Charge')...('Return Payment Charge')*" I think the list of charges and amounts are clear in this document, so I think it was reasonable for Vanquis to apply the charges when it did. I haven't seen evidence that any of the charges were applied unfairly.
- I understand that Mr B said these charges have had a big impact on his life. But having considered Vanquis' actions as a whole, I'm satisfied it treated him positively and sympathetically in this case. I say this because I can see it has frozen interest and charges on the account a number of times once Mr B made it aware he was in difficulty.
- I can see Vanquis has also refunded some of these charges over the years and entered into reduced payment arrangements with Mr B in line with his circumstances. So I'm satisfied Vanquis treated Mr B fairly once it was aware of his financial difficulties.

For these reasons, I do not uphold this complaint.

My final decision

My final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint about Vanquis Bank Limited.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr B to accept or reject my decision before 15 April 2021.

Dan Prevett
Ombudsman