

The complaint

Mrs S complains that Marks & Spencer Financial Services plc (M&S) didn't advise her that her credit file would be adversely affected when she took a 60 day 'breathing space' on her credit card payments. And it didn't amend her credit file when it agreed to do so. She would like the situation rectified.

What happened

The details of this complaint are well known to both parties, so I won't repeat them again here. Instead I will focus on giving the reasons for my decision.

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 agree with the conclusions reached by our investigator for the following reasons:-

- In a phone call in April 2020 M&S made it clear that, in response to Mrs S's request for a payment holiday, it could place her account on hold for two months. But this would result in late payment markers being put on her credit file. So, I think Mrs S knew there would be an impact on her credit file if her account was put on hold.
- I understand M&S has now rectified the credit file. It's unfortunate it took a while to do so. But I don't find its explanation that it took longer than it should due to current circumstances leading to a high volume of such requests unreasonable. It has paid Mrs S a total of £100 compensation which I think is reasonable in the circumstances.
- Mrs S has told us that she has lost out financially as a result of the adverse information on her credit file. She has evidenced an application for car finance and one for a mortgage were declined. But from what I have seen there is no evidence to say these applications only failed due to the information M&S recorded. But even if this were the case Mrs S was aware there would be an impact on her credit file when her account was put on hold.

My final decision

My final decision is that I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs S to accept or reject my decision before 26 April 2021.

Bridget Makins
Ombudsman