

The complaint

Mr H complains that Metro Bank PLC failed to provide account statements which affected his mortgage applications.

What happened

Mr H says he needed his account statements for his mortgage application in early 2021. He says they were not provided and so he was unable to proceed with his purchase. Mr H says he then made a second application on a different property and asked Metro for the statements. He says they were not provided due to a problem Metro had with its systems and were later provided in a format not accepted by his mortgage provider. Mr H says he took time off work to sort matters out and made numerous telephone calls to Metro about the issue. He says he didn't receive promised call backs and would like appropriate compensation.

Metro accepts it had a problem producing the documents but says it provided industry wide acceptable alternatives such as certified documents confirming income. It has offered £100 compensation and has apologised for what took place.

Mr H brought his complaint to us and our investigator upheld the complaint. The investigator thought Mr H was trying to buy his first property and would have been caused distress and inconvenience as a result of what took place. The investigator thought Metro could have done more to help Mr H and recommended it pay a total of £350 compensation as the effect of the problem was greater on him than someone not in his position of trying to obtain a mortgage.

Mr H doesn't accept that view and says the compensation should be about £700.

Metro doesn't accept that view and maintains the compensation is appropriate and says there is no evidence the information it provided was the reason for the mortgage rejection.

I asked both sides for further information. Mr H has provided a letter from his mortgage broker but hasn't provided evidence of loss or work or details of the first mortgage application.

Metro has provided its account notes but hasn't commented on the questions I asked about Mr H attending a branch or about missed call backs.

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 have come to the overall view that I uphold this complaint and agree with the compensation recommended by the investigator. I appreciate Mr H will be disappointed by my decision.

I appreciate Mr H says the first property he tried to buy fell through due to problems

providing his account statements. But I have not been given any evidence of that and so it would be unfair for me to conclude in those circumstances that the statement issue was the cause of that.

There is no issue here that Mr H asked Metro for account statements, but it was unable to provide them in the usual form. I can see that Metro accepts it provided poor service to Mr H and has fairly apologised for what took place. So, the only real issue for me to decide is the level of compensation as Metro accepts its systems caused the problem here.

I'm satisfied that Mr H was trying to buy a property which I accept can be a stressful process. I have looked carefully at the e-mail Mr H's mortgage broker sent to Metro about the statements and am satisfied that the mortgage provider would not accept the documents provided by Metro. So, I accept Mr H was caused distress and inconvenience and would have been concerned about the possibility of the purchase falling through. I appreciate Metro says the solution it provided was an "industry wide acceptable solution" but I'm satisfied that Mr H's mortgage provider didn't agree, and, in any event, Metro accepts it couldn't provide an appropriate service to Mr H.

I have also looked carefully at Metro's records and can see that Mr H made a number of telephone calls to it about the problem. And that Metro was given the e-mail about the position and possibility of the sale falling through from Mr H's mortgage broker. I think it clear from those records that Mr H was expecting call backs from Metro that he didn't seem to receive, and which Metro hasn't clarified despite my request.

Overall, I'm satisfied that Mr H was caused a significant level of distress and inconvenience about a situation that was not really resolved. I accept Metro did provide certified documents to Mr H which appear to have been acceptable to the mortgage provider, but I think the situation took some time to sort out. I'm satisfied that the impact on Mr H was clearly greater than on for example a customer wanting statements for record keeping, as he was in the process of trying to obtain a mortgage.

I can't fairly award compensation for Mr H's lost work in the circumstances as I do not have sufficient information. I appreciate Mr H no longer works for his employer at the time and so can't provide such evidence but that is not something I can fairly hold Metro responsible for. I can't see any evidence that Mr H suffered a financial loss and can see he was able to buy the property.

Putting things right

I think Metro should pay £350 compensation in total which I find fair and reasonable and in line with the type of award we would make for this type of impact and complaint. It is not clear if Metro did pay the £100 compensation it initially offered and no doubt it will deduct that amount from the award if it has done so.

My final decision

My final decision is that I uphold this complaint and order Metro Bank PLC to pay Mr H a total of £350 compensation.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr H to accept or reject my decision before 31 August 2022.

David Singh
Ombudsman