

The complaint

Mr M is unhappy about an incorrect address link on his credit file with Transunion International UK Limited.

What happened

Mr M noticed there was an incorrect address link on his credit file. So, he raised a complaint with Transunion in July 2021 as he wanted an explanation for how this error happened. Mr M also believes the incorrect address link may have impacted his creditworthiness and has asked for compensation for the inconvenience caused.

Transunion said in 2007, a company which seems to be a part of Transunion, carried out some internal analysis work on behalf of Transunion. In doing so, an incorrect address was linked to Mr M in error which remained on their database since then. Nonetheless, as Mr M indicated the address link was wrong, Transunion removed it from their database. Transunion say they searched Mr M's credit file in October 2021, and this showed the address link had been removed.

Our Investigator looked into Mr M's concern. In summary he said, he was unable to determine exactly why the incorrect address was linked to Mr M's credit file due to the time that had passed. And while our Investigator didn't think Mr M's creditworthiness was impacted due to this error, he did think Mr M was caused inconvenience. Our Investigator also said Transunion took too long to resolve this issue for Mr M – it took around three months from the point Mr M raised a dispute to when the address link was removed from his credit file. So, our Investigator recommended Transunion pay Mr M £150 compensation.

Mr M agreed. But Transunion didn't. They said the address link had been created and held under legitimate interest and there's no evidence to suggest the address link had a detrimental effect on Mr M, nor his ability to obtain credit. So, the complaint has 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.

I note Transunion have said that due to the time that's passed since the analysis work in 2007, they can't provide detail on how the analysis was carried out at the time – such as what was used to generate the address link or what information was held in the database at the time which may have led to this error. So, I've been unable to determine exactly how the address was linked to Mr M. Or exactly how it was displayed on Mr M's credit file as neither party have been able to provide me with evidence of this. Nonetheless, Transunion have agreed this was an error and removed the address link in October 2021. Mr M has also confirmed to us more recently that the address link had been removed. So, I've gone on to consider whether Transunion have done enough to put things right once they'd been told an error had been made.

Transunion initially said a dispute was raised about the incorrect information in July 2021 and that this was then corrected by October 2021. Transunion then said they checked their records and couldn't see a dispute had been raised in July 2021 as they previously suggested. And that the link was queried as part of a complaint that was raised in November 2021. Transunion also said it wasn't until December 2022 that Mr M raised this issue as a direct complaint – even though this date hasn't happened yet, so I think Transunion meant to say December 2021. Mr M has provided us with a copy of an email he sent to Transunion on 27 July 2021, after receiving a copy of his credit report and noticing the incorrect address link. In this email, he explains that there is incorrect information about an address link on his credit file and he also requested that Transunion correct this error. So, on balance, I think what Transunion told us initially is right – in that Mr M raised a dispute in July 2021 about the incorrect address link. With that in mind, I agree with our Investigator in that the three months it took Transunion to amend the correction wasn't fair or reasonable.

In relation to the impact to Mr M, Transunion have confirmed there were no accounts or adverse credit which was linked to Mr M's credit file as a result of the incorrect address link. And I haven't seen any evidence to suggest this was the case. So, I don't have any reason to disbelieve what Transunion have said.

Mr M says he doesn't have any evidence that this error has impacted his creditworthiness. And Mr M hasn't provided us with any evidence to suggest he was declined for any credit or borrowing as a direct result of this error. However, I can appreciate this issue would have caused Mr M inconvenience and worry – especially when finding out that an address, which wasn't linked to Mr M, was on his credit file.

Having thought about the length of time it took Transunion to amend the address link on Mr M's credit file, alongside the distress and inconvenience this issue caused Mr M, I think Transunion should pay him £150 compensation.

My final decision

For reasons explained above, I uphold this complaint and require Transunion International UK Limited to pay Mr M £150 compensation.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr M to accept or reject my decision before 7 September 2022.

Leanne McEvoy
Ombudsman