

The complaint

Mr A complains that Barclays Bank UK PLC made errors which caused delays when he tried to switch products. He says interest rates increased during the delay and asks that Barclays applies a lower interest rate to his mortgage.

What happened

Mr A has a mortgage with Barclays. He tried to choose a new product online in June 2022 but was unable to do so. Barclays sent a link with available rates to Mr A. However, when he chose a rate he received a message asking him to call Barclays. This happened twice.

Mr A met with a mortgage adviser and took out a new fixed interest rate product. He says by this time, rates had increased.

Barclays said the link it sent included rates for offset mortgages, which Mr A couldn't take out without advice. It said it shouldn't have included offset products in the link it sent to Mr A and offered £150 compensation.

Our investigator said this was fair. She said Mr A chose an offset product which he couldn't take out without advice. He chose to wait for an appointment with a mortgage adviser instead of choosing another rate. Our investigator said lenders can change their range of interest rate products at any time.

Mr A didn't agree. He said it wasn't in dispute that Barclays made an error when it sent him a link with both fixed rate and offset products. He said he didn't know the offset rates weren't available to him until he spoke to the mortgage adviser. Mr A said if Barclays had only sent fixed rate products he'd have chosen the most favourable rate available at that time. He said the right outcome is for Barclays to apply this rate.

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.

Mr A first tried to choose a new mortgage product on 10 June 2022. He had problems and Barclays sent him a link which would allow him to choose a product.

Mr A called Barclays again on 14 June 2022 as he was still unable to take out a product online. I've listened to a recording of this call. Mr A told Barclays he'd tried to apply for an offset product. Barclays said he wasn't able to take out an offset product online.

Barclays said it would send a new link. It said Mr A would be able to apply for a non-offset product online. It said even if the link contained offset products Mr A would not be able to take out an offset product without meeting with a mortgage adviser.

Mr A asked to meet with a mortgage adviser. Barclays booked an appointment on 21 June 2022. After taking advice, Mr A decided against switching to an offset mortgage. He took out a non-offset five-year fixed interest rate product. Barclays says this product was available on

10 June 2022 and its rates didn't change between then and Mr A choosing the product.

Barclays apologised for sending a link to Mr A which included offset products, as Mr A couldn't switch to an offset product without first meeting with a mortgage adviser. It offered £150 compensation for the inconvenience this caused. I think that was fair and reasonable in the circumstances.

Mr A said if Barclays had only sent information about products that were available to him he'd have chosen one of these products. He says he'd now have a better rate and wouldn't have wasted time speaking to a mortgage adviser.

Mr A says he recalls rates being lower when he first tried to take out a new product, but can't provide evidence to support this. Barclays says its rates didn't change between 10 and 21 June 2022. It sent rate sheets and I can see that the same fixed rate products were available on 9 June 2022 and 24 June 2022. So, despite any confusion caused by the link containing offset products, Mr A ultimately took out a product from the same range available to him on 10 June 2022.

Barclays told Mr A he could apply online for a non-offset product. It was Mr A's choice to meet with a mortgage adviser to discuss taking out an offset product. I don't think it's fair and reasonable in the circumstances to require Barclays to pay compensation for his time spent doing this.

My final decision

My decision is that Barclays Bank UK PLC should pay £150 to Mr A, as it offered to do (unless of course it's already done so).

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr A to accept or reject my decision before 30 June 2023.

Ruth Stevenson
Ombudsman