

The complaint

Mr J is unhappy that Vanquis Bank Limited are reporting query markers to his credit file.

What happened

Mr J felt Vanquis were incorrectly reporting the balance of his account on his credit file and queried this with them. Vanquis placed query markers on Mr J's credit file while they investigated the matter.

But while Vanquis did find in Mr J's favour and updated the credit file reporting moving forwards to the correct amount, they didn't update the incorrect reporting they'd already made and left the query markers for that incorrect reporting on Mr J's credit file. Mr J wasn't happy about this as the query markers were adversely affecting his credit score. So, he raised a complaint.

Vanquis responded to Mr J but didn't feel they were acting unfairly by making the reports to Mr J's credit file that they were. Mr J wasn't satisfied with Vanquis' response, so he referred his complaint to this service.

One of our investigators looked at this complaint. They didn't feel it was fair that the query markers should remain on Mr J's credit file after the query had been resolved in his favour, so recommended that Vanquis should remove them. Vanquis didn't agree, so the matter was escalated to an ombudsman for a final 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.

I issued a provisional decision on this complaint on 7 September 2023 as follows:

It seems clearly and obviously unfair to me that Mr J should incur the potentially adverse effects of having the query markers on his credit file, given that the query he raised was found in his favour meaning that Vanquis' reporting was incorrect.

Additionally, Vanquis are obliged to make accurate reports to the credit reference agencies. This means that if the balance that they were reporting was incorrect – as Mr J successfully queried that it was – that Vanquis should correct the historical reporting for the queried months so the balance for those months is reported as it should have been.

Additionally, once the query had been resolved in Mr J's favour, and the necessary corrections to the incorrect historical reporting had taken place, then there would be no need for the query markers to remain on Mr J's credit file – because the query was resolved and because the corrected reporting was no longer being queried.

All of which means that I'll be provisionally upholding this complaint in Mr J's favour and instructing Vanquis to amend the incorrect historical reporting – for the months that Mr J

queried – to the correct reporting, so that it's as it should have been had it been reported correctly. And Vanquis must also remove the query markers from Mr J's credit file.

Finally, it's also clear and obvious to me that Mr J has incurred a degree of upset and frustration here because of Vanquis failure to make accurate reports to the credit reference agencies but to instead continue to report amounts that are now known to be incorrect alongside query markers for a query that is no longer in place. And because of this I'm also instructing Vanquis to pay £250 to Mr J as compensation for the trouble and upset that he's unfairly and unreasonably incurred here.

In arriving at this compensation amount, I've considered the impact of these events on Mr J, including as per the testimony of Mr J himself, alongside the general framework which this service uses when assessing compensation amounts – details of which can be found on this services website. And having done so, I feel that £250 is a fair amount.

In my provisional decision letter, I gave both Mr J and Vanquis the opportunity to respond and provide any comments or new information they might wish me to consider before I moved to issue a final decision. Mr J confirmed that he was happy to accept my provisional decision, whereas Vanquis did not respond.

As such, I see no reason not to issue a final decision here upholding this complaint in Mr J's favour on the basis described above. And I therefore confirm that my final decision is that I do uphold this complaint in Mr J's favour on that basis accordingly.

Putting things right

Vanquis must amend the incorrect historical reporting – for the months that Mr J queried – so that it's as it should have been had it been reported correctly. And Vanquis must also remove the query markers from Mr J's credit file.

Vanquis must also make a payment of £250 to Mr J.

My final decision

My final decision is that I uphold this complaint against Vanquis Bank Limited on the basis explained above.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr J to accept or reject my decision before 3 November 2023.

Paul Cooper

Ombudsman