

## **The complaint**

Mr E and Mrs T complain that Santander UK Plc caused delays and unfairly declined their mortgage application. They ask for an apology and compensation for financial loss and emotional turmoil.

## **What happened**

Mr E and Mrs T started a mortgage application with Santander in June 2022, via a broker. After reviewing the information provided, the amount Santander said it would lend was less than Mr E and Mrs T wanted to borrow.

Mrs T says Santander kept asking for information. She says they were told each time that if they provided the information they would get the mortgage, but Santander then asked for more information. She said Santander should have asked for the information it needed at the outset. Mrs T said this went on for weeks and Santander then said it had put their details into the wrong system.

Mrs T says they applied elsewhere and were offered a mortgage. But interest rates rose during the delays. She says this will cost them about £20,000 over the mortgage term in addition to having to pay for fast-track conveyancing.

Our investigator said Santander had dealt with the application fairly and hadn't caused any unnecessary delays. He said it was entitled to ask for further information and he hadn't seen evidence it had told Mrs T and Mr E it would offer them a mortgage.

Mr E and Mrs T didn't agree. Mrs T said the point of their complaint was being repeatedly asked for information on the basis they'd get the mortgage. She says Santander should have said it wouldn't lend at the outset.

## **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.

Mrs T and Mr E's broker submitted their mortgage application on 29 June 2022. Supporting information was provided by 11 July 2022. Santander declined the application on 19 July 2022. It said it had concerns about affordability due to Mrs T and Mr E's credit commitments.

On 25 July 2022 the broker asked if Santander would review the decision if Mrs T and Mr E provide evidence of repaying their credit commitments and further information about their incomes and transactions on their bank statements. Santander agreed and the broker provided the further information in early August 2022. Santander asked for further information. On 24 August 2022 Santander said it would lend, but the maximum amount was about £23,000 less than Mrs T and Mr E had applied for.

In late August 2022 Mrs T and Mr E applied to another lender.

Santander reviewed Mrs T and Mr E's application and provided a decision (to decline)

without delays. It was Mrs T and Mr E's choice to ask if Santander would re-consider if they repaid credit commitments and provided further information. This inevitably meant the application was with Santander for longer. Santander was entitled to ask for further information when reviewing the application, to help it reach a fair decision. I don't think it caused any unreasonable delays when doing so.

I haven't seen evidence that Santander told Mrs T and Mr E that it would lend (the amount they wanted) if they provided more information.

I don't think Santander treated Mrs T and Mr E unfairly. It follows that I don't uphold this complaint. I don't think it's fair and reasonable to require Santander to apologise or pay compensation to Mrs T and Mr E.

Mrs T and Mr E also made a complaint about the broker and Mrs T said these complaints should have been looked at together. I've reviewed the evidence provided in relation to Mr E and Mrs T's complaint about the broker. This hasn't changed the outcome of this complaint.

### **My final decision**

My decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr E and Mrs T to accept or reject my decision before 12 March 2024.

Ruth Stevenson  
**Ombudsman**