

The complaint

Mrs D complains that Barclays Bank UK PLC says she owes money to it.

What happened

Mrs D says she was the victim of fraud, and a debt was taken out in her name. She says Barclays wrote off the debt but is now asking her to repay it. Mrs D would like Barclays to stop its action which it's taking via a collection company.

Barclays says it wrote off a credit card debt of about £1,600 which it accepts was taken out in Mrs D's name fraudulently. It says Mrs D had a current account which had an overdrawn balance of over £3,900 which it closed in 2015. Barclays says Mrs D agreed a repayment plan via a third-party debt charity which continued until 2021. It says it is owed money and entitled to ask Mrs D to repay it.

Mrs D brought her complaint to us, and our investigator didn't uphold it. The investigator thought the fraud matter was not linked to Mrs D's debt and Barclays was entitled to ask her to repay it.

Mrs D doesn't accept that view and says Barclays fraud team told her she didn't owe it anything.

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 don't uphold this complaint. I appreciate Mrs D will be disappointed by my decision, but I hope this decision can explain what has taken place.

I have looked carefully at the records Barclays has given us and the letter Mrs D provided about her debt arrangement with the debt charity. That letter dated May 2019 from the debt charity clearly shows Mrs D had entered into an arrangement with Barclays and other lenders. The letter refers to a Barclays overdraft debt with an original balance of just under £4,000 with about £1,600 repaid. Barclays statements for Mrs D's account show an overdraft balance of just under £4,000 in 2015 when the account was closed. So, I'm satisfied that Mrs D had an account with Barclays that was overdrawn and that she entered into a repayment plan with a debt charity.

It follows that I am satisfied, having looked at Barclays records, some of that debt remains and that Barclays is entitled to ask Mrs D to repay the balance which is now well under £1,000. I also think Barclays is entitled to ask a third-party debt collection business to collect the debt.

I appreciate Mrs D was the victim of fraud and that a credit card debt was taken out in her name. There is no doubt that credit card debt was refunded by Barclays, and I think it likely

that if Mrs D asked Barclays fraud team about that debt, she would have been told she didn't owe it money. But I'm also satisfied the fraud and the current account debt are completely separate debts and issues.

I have made clear that I'm satisfied Mrs D's current account closed with a balance owing to Barclays in 2015. The fraud was not connected to that account but was a credit card debt. I appreciate Mrs D may have been confused by the two debts, but I'm satisfied Barclays hasn't made a mistake or acted unfairly and has provided an explanation to her.

Overall, for the reasons I have made clear, I'm satisfied Mrs D still owes a balance to Barclays for her overdraft balance. I hope she will contact either Barclays or the debt collection business to arrange a repayment plan which had previously been set up with the debt charity.

My final decision

My final decision is that I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs D to accept or reject my decision before 8 December 2023.

David Singh
Ombudsman