



The complaint

Mr C complains Home Retail Group Card Services Limited are incorrectly reporting his use of their Buy Now Pay Later plans (BNPL) to credit reference agencies.

What happened

The details for this complaint are well-known to both parties, so I won't repeat them again here. The facts aren't in dispute, so I'll focus on giving the reasons for my 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.

Having considered everything, I've reached the same conclusions as our Investigator for these reasons:

- Financial businesses, like Home Retail Group, are obligated to report factual and accurate information to credit reference agencies about the way their customers use and manage accounts. It's not disputed that Mr C has bought items using Home Retail Group's BNPL plans. And at the time of raising his complaint, Mr C had an outstanding balance on his account.
- While Mr C may have been utilising Home Retail Group's BNPL, he still had an outstanding balance with them under his credit agreement. Regardless of whether he was still within the interest free period, he was still using the credit available to him under his agreement. As such, Home Retail Group are expected to report this to credit reference agencies.
- A BNPL balance is part of the overall balance a consumer has with the relevant lender. And this is information we'd expect to be reported on a consumer's credit file. That's because a credit file needs to be an accurate reflection of what credit accounts a consumer holds, how much of their available credit limits have been utilised, and how those credit accounts are being managed.
- I've not seen any evidence that suggests Home Retail Group has been reporting inaccurate information about the way Mr C has been using his account. As such, I cannot agree they've treated him unfairly by reporting his use of BNPL plans.
- I've noted what Mr C has about other lenders he has BNPL plans with. However, I can only consider the actions of Home Retail Group, and as mentioned above, I consider they've acted reasonably.

I know this isn't the outcome Mr C hoped for. However, for the reasons above, I'm not upholding his complaint.

My final decision

My final decision is that I'm not upholding Mr C's complaint about Home Retail Group Card Services Limited.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr C to accept or reject my decision before 15 April 2024.

Sarrah Turay
Ombudsman