

## **The complaint**

Mr M complains that TransUnion International UK Limited (TransUnion) are reporting incorrect information on his credit file.

## **What happened**

In May 2023, Mr M raised a dispute with TransUnion about two accounts showing on his credit file that he didn't recognise. The dispute was unsuccessful, and Mr M says he was told to contact the account provider.

Mr M contacted the credit provider, which I'll refer to as Company A. He received a response to confirm Company A had ceased trading, so no data is held that is capable of being searched or extracted to review and amend his credit file. Mr M was advised to contact the Credit Reference Agencies (CRAs) to request a data amendment if he believes there has been an error.

Mr M raised another dispute with TransUnion, which again was unsuccessful, so he raised a complaint.

In its final response, TransUnion said it had contacted Company A and it confirmed the data had been reported accurately and didn't give the required permission for it to be removed from Mr M's credit file.

Unhappy with TransUnion's response, Mr M referred his complaint to this service. Our Investigator reviewed matters and said TransUnion was not responsible for the information displayed and had met its obligations by raising the dispute with Company A.

Mr M didn't accept our Investigator's findings. He said Company A shouldn't be able to report information on consumer's credit files that it cannot validate. And TransUnion are reporting data it cannot substantiate.

As no agreement has been reached, the matter has been passed to me to decide. Before doing so, I arranged for us to contact Mr M, and gave him time to tell us if he had any information which would show the data Company A was reporting was incorrect. Mr M didn't reply to this contact.

## **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.

In considering what is fair and reasonable, I've taken into account the relevant industry rules and guidance, and what would be considered as good industry practice.

Firstly, it may be helpful to clarify what it is this decision will cover. This complaint is against TransUnion and so I can only consider the actions of TransUnion in this decision. I therefore won't be commenting on the actions of Company A here.

The information held by CRAs is provided to them from sources such as financial businesses, local authorities and utility companies, who are the owners of the data. CRAs can only display the information provided by the data owners. They do not actively approach data providers for information, rather it is sent to the CRA in a data package for them to report.

However, CRAs are expected to take reasonable measures to ensure the information reported via their credit files is accurate. So, while TransUnion isn't generally responsible for the data provided, it is required to investigate and respond when a dispute is raised about the possibility of inaccurate data.

TransUnion can generally only amend information it holds if the data owner confirms the information is wrong. If the data owner says the information is accurate and does not give permission for it to be amended, TransUnion cannot change it unless it can be proven to be wrong.

Mr M says Company A gave permission in writing for the entries to be removed, but I don't agree it did. Company A advised Mr M that he could contact the CRAs to request a data amendment if he believed there to be an error. It did not confirm there had been an error or that it authorised the removal of the disputed entries on Mr M's credit file.

When a consumer disputes an entry on their credit file, I'd expect the CRA to raise the dispute directly with the data provider, which in Mr M's case is Company A. TransUnion has shown it raised disputes on both accounts with Company A in May and September 2023, and it didn't agree for the data to be changed. In response to both disputes, Company A said the data shown is an accurate reflection of the management of Mr M's accounts.

Because of this, I can't say that TransUnion has acted unfairly by continuing to display the information it has been provided.

I would note that within Company A's response to TransUnion, it asked for further information to support an error, so it could investigate this further. TransUnion has been unable to provide anything to show that Mr M was advised of this.

However, I gave Mr M the opportunity to send any information he may have to support the disputed accounts didn't belong to him and I've not been provided with anything to show the data is wrong.

In addition, TransUnion were provided with evidence of a previous complaint Mr M raised regarding the irresponsible lending of four loans. Within this earlier correspondence, Mr M refers to the account numbers of the two loans that he is now disputing belong to him.

In Mr M's irresponsible lending complaint, he says:

*"I took out the first loan in November 2018 and had to take out a second, third and fourth loan to pay back to the first loan..."*

*... continued to loan to me over a period of over two years and approve these four loans"*

When asked about this, Mr M said he flagged all four accounts on his credit file, but he knew the two he was disputing didn't belong to him. He says he thought the best way to have them removed from his credit file was to submit an unaffordable lending complaint, before he became aware that he could challenge incorrect entries on his credit report.

However, I note Mr M specifically refers to applying for four separate loans which formed part of his complaint regarding Company A irresponsibly lending to him – this includes the two loans he is now disputing with TransUnion. The dates the disputed loans were taken out were also within the time period confirmed by Mr M as above.

I'm therefore satisfied TransUnion had enough to support the accounts in dispute did belong to Mr M. And even without this evidence, TransUnion met its obligations by raising the dispute with Company A, who confirmed the data was accurate. So, I can't say TransUnion acted unfairly by not removing the disputed accounts from Mr M's credit file.

### **My final decision**

For the reasons set out above, my final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr M to accept or reject my decision before 2 October 2024.

Nicola Bastin  
**Ombudsman**