

The complaint

Mr J complains that he was promised finance, brokered for him by Match Me Car Finance LTD, trading as Match Me Car Finance ("MMCF"), was pre-approved, but that he was later told it had been declined.

What happened

Mr J contacted MMCF in November 2023 as he wanted to change a finance agreement to a hire purchase agreement. He says that he was told the finance had been pre-approved at a favourable rate but at the last minute he was told not to sign the finance agreement as it had been unexpectedly declined.

He complained to MMCF, and they accepted that their agent had confirmed there was no doubt that the finance would be approved. MMCF offered Mr J £50 to compensate him for the distress and inconvenience caused but Mr J remained unhappy and referred his complaint to this Service.

Our investigator thought MMCF should pay Mr J £150 in compensation.

MMCF didn't respond so the complaint has been referred to me, and ombudsman, to make 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 agree with the investigator's opinion. I'll explain why.

Where the information I've got is incomplete, unclear, or contradictory, as some of it is here, I have to base my decision on the balance of probabilities.

I've read and considered the whole file, but I'll concentrate my comments on what I think is relevant. If I don't comment on any specific point, it's not because I've failed to take it on board and think about it but because I don't think I need to comment on it in order to reach what I think is the right outcome.

MMCF haven't provided their business file on this complaint, so I've based my decision on the information available to me.

It's clear from MMCF's final response that Mr J had been led to believe that finance would be guaranteed. I think Mr J will have experienced some distress and inconvenience as a result of that misinformation. He's explained that he was going through a separation at the time, and I can understand that will have placed more than the usual amount of financial strain on him. MMCF have also been slow to respond here, and their final response to Mr J was confusing as it suggested he, and not they, had provided misleading information. Mr J has

also had to escalate his complaint to this Service when I think it could have been resolved earlier.

In the circumstances, I would agree with our investigator that £150 is a more appropriate level of compensation for the distress and inconvenience caused.

My final decision

For the reasons I've given above, I uphold this complaint and tell Match Me Car Finance LTD to pay Mr J £150 in compensation. They may deduct £50 if that's already been paid to Mr J.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr J to accept or reject my decision before 18 September 2024.

Phillip McMahon
Ombudsman