

## **The complaint**

Miss M complains that Frasers Group Financial Services Limited trading as Studio provided her with poor customer service, and this affected her credit file.

## **What happened**

Miss M says she was asked to reset her password when logging into her Studio account on 12 November 2023. She says she's tried to reset this, but each time she's received an error message. Miss M says she's contacted Studio hundreds of times via a website message, email and she says she set up a social media account to contact them, but she's still not been able to login despite her following all of the steps. Miss M says the issue has caused her to miss contractual monthly payments to her account, and it has affected her credit file. Miss M made a complaint to Studio.

Studio partially upheld Miss M's complaint and they credited £50 compensation to her account for the stress and anxiety caused by her being unable to log into her account online. Miss M brought her complaint to our service.

Our investigator partially upheld Miss M's complaint. He said the issues Miss M had with access went on for too long, and he thought an award of £150 (an extra £100) was more in line with the distress and inconvenience caused. He said that as there were alternative methods to pay, Studio didn't need to amend Miss M's credit file.

Studio asked for an ombudsman to review the complaint. They told us that when they became aware of Miss M's login issues this was quickly addressed, and they believed the compensation they gave Miss M was fair.

Miss M said the customer service she received from Studio was absolutely disgusting as she had a lack of any help or accountability from Studio. Miss M told us about her personal circumstances at the time of the issues and how the issues with Studio made this so much worse.

## **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'd like to thank Miss M with being open about her personal circumstances around the time of the login issues with Studio. While I'll not go into detail about her personal circumstances in this decision to protect her identity, I can assure Miss M I have read everything she's told us.

I do think that Studio let Miss M down with poor customer service here. I say this as Miss M has provided many screenshots of messages she's had or tried to have with Studio. And it appears some messages have been closed down by Studio without a resolution or suggestion offered to her, which would be distressing for her.

Miss M was also asked for the screenshot of the error message despite already sending this

to Studio, which would have inconvenienced her, and it would be distressing for her to have to keep sending them this when she had already done so.

I've considered what Studio have said about the level of compensation which they believed to be fair. But I'm not persuaded this recognises the distress and inconvenience that Miss M was caused. She was waiting months for a resolution without adequate help. While Studio may have acted quickly when the query reached the relevant team, this doesn't excuse the poor service Miss M had prior to this point when she first raised the issue, and she kept trying with increased desperation to have the situation resolved.

So I agree with our investigator that £150 compensation (less anything which has already been paid), is a fairer award than what Studio paid Miss M. However, it would not be proportionate for me to ask Studio to amend Miss M's credit file with any payments she missed while the issues were ongoing.

I say this because there were other methods that Miss M could make a repayment without having to make a repayment online. I can see from Studio's system notes that when they raised a case on their systems for Miss M the note shows "*signposted to retail and adv(ised) on different payment methods*". So I do think that Miss M reasonably ought to have known there were other ways she could make a payment as opposed to logging in online. So while I won't be asking Studio to amend Miss M's credit file, I will be asking them to put things right for Miss M by increasing the compensation.

### **Putting things right**

Our investigator has suggested that Studio pay Miss M a total of £150 compensation (less anything they have already paid her) for distress and inconvenience, which I think is reasonable in the circumstances.

### **My final decision**

I uphold this complaint in part. Frasers Group Financial Services Limited trading as Studio should pay Miss M a total of £150 compensation (less anything they have already paid her) for distress and inconvenience.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss M to accept or reject my decision before 22 October 2024.

Gregory Sloanes  
**Ombudsman**