

The complaint

Mr M complains that Salad Finance Limited trading as SaladMoney misled him about the information it would review when considering his loan application.

What happened

Mr M applied for a loan with SaladMoney which was rejected on 27 March 2024. On 11 May 2024 Mr M sent SaladMoney an email complaining that it had viewed 12 month's transactions when it had told him it would look at only 90 days' worth of transactions. He said he had only agreed to it look at 90 days' worth. He did not receive a reply and sent a second email on 9 July 2024 asking why he had not received a response.

A few days later Mr M submitted a complaint to this service. SaladMoney sent Mr M a final response letter explaining that at no stage in the application process did it state that it only has access to 90 days' worth of Open Banking data. SaladMoney also apologised for not responding sooner, but it had limited records since he did not have an open account with it.

The matter was considered by one of our investigators who obtained further information from SaladMoney about the application process. Having done so she was satisfied that SaladMoney had not told Mr M that it would only look at 90 days' worth of transactions.

Mr M didn't agree and asked for the matter to be referred to an ombudsman.

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 have reviewed the process used by SaladMoney for handling loan applications, going through each stage as Mr M would have done when he made his application. This explains that the applicant will be directed to their bank so that they can give authority for SaladMoney to have access to the relevant account details, including transactions. This explains that the period during which SaladMoney may access this information is 90 days.

The wording on the system is as follows:

'SaladMoney will be able to review your account information for the next 90 days to ensure you are an employee from the organisation you selected and that you can afford the loan you are applying for'.

SaladMoney has told this service that it reviews the last 12 months of accounts as part of the standard affordability checks, and normally it would be provided with 18 months of historic data under the open banking standard to complete an affordability assessment. I note that the application process offered Mr M the opportunity to remove the permission he had granted at any time if he so wished.

I appreciate that Mr M may have thought SaladMoney would only look at 90 days' worth of transactions, but that is not what it said. I cannot see that SaladMoney has misled Mr M as I

believe the wording it used made the position sufficiently clear. The phrase 'will be able to review your account information for the next 90 days' does not imply it will only look at 90 days' worth of material. It says that it has a 90-day window in which to look at the material.

As for the delay in responding to Mr M's initial complaint email, I do not consider this is a matter within my jurisdiction. Complaint handling is not a regulated activity and I do not consider this element of his complaint to be about the underlying financial service that gave him cause to complain. In any event I note SaladMoney has explained why it was slow to respond and has apologised.

My final decision

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 29 October 2024.

Ivor Graham
Ombudsman