

The complaint

Mr H complains that having made an agreed payment to bring his overdraft within limit, Barclays Bank UK PLC still recorded a late payment against his credit file.

What happened

In February 2024 (the exact date is unclear) Mr H says that he called Barclays about bringing his overdraft within limit. He says that he reached an agreement that he would make an appropriate payment within fourteen days of the end of the month. He made a payment on 11 March 2024 to bring the overdraft back within limit, but still had a missed payment recorded against his credit file. When he spoke to a complaints adviser, he says they told him that a payment would have taken 3 or 4 working days to reach his account. Mr H says an adviser had previously told him that a payment would reach the account immediately or within four hours.

Barclays said it hadn't made an error with regard to the information recorded against Mr H's credit file. It had no record of the telephone call that Mr H has referred to.

On referral to the Financial Ombudsman Service, our Investigator understood that the agreement was for Mr H to make the payment by the end of the month, and as Mr H had not done this Barclays had acted correctly in applying the marker to his credit file.

Mr H said that that was not the agreement and that he had agreed with the adviser that he would make the payment within fourteen days of the end of the month. He insisted that he was misinformed about how long the payment would take to reach his account and he has since queried that information and shown us a response from Barclays confirming that any payment would be instant but can take up to four hours.

Our Investigator said that as there was no record of the telephone call, he could not uphold the complaint.

The matter has been referred to me for an Ombudsman's consideration.

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 making my decision, if the evidence is incomplete or contradictory, which some of it is here, I will decide what in my view was most likely to have happened.

Mr H is insistent that he made a telephone call to Barclays in February 2024. Unfortunately, he tells us that as he was in hospital the call was made from a public phone so he can't give the exact date and time. There is no recording of that call, or any note of it. So I have to decide, if he did reach some agreement with Barclays that it would accept a payment to bring the account back within limit within a certain time period, what I think it is most likely would have been said to him.

Barclays reports its information to the credit reference agencies (CRAs) at the end of every month. This means that when reporting arrears or a missed payment, the credit report would record the situation at the end of the month. So I think it most likely that Mr H would have been told that he needed to make a payment to bring the account below the overdraft limit by the end of the month. I bear in mind that Mr H has told us that he wouldn't have had difficulty making the payment. And if he was in financial difficulty any payment arrangement would have been recorded. So, bearing that in mind, I don't think that Barclays made an error in reporting the position to the CRAs.

As for whether Mr H was misinformed, he has shown us a reply on Barclays' chat line. This clearly said that with regard to making a payment to bring an overdraft within limit, it would reach the account immediately or within up to four hours. I appreciate that this evidence came from a recent Chat line call Mr H had with Barclays. However I do think that it shows that Barclays' advisers are still giving inaccurate information about how long it takes for a payment to reach an account and reduce an overdraft. However in this case that doesn't affect how the payment was recorded, as he didn't make the payment before the end of February 2024.

I've listened to the calls Mr H made after he had seen the marker on his credit report. He called on 15 March 2024, and the adviser agreed that they would look into the matter and contact him again. He didn't receive a call back and called again on 7 April 2024. Barclays paid Mr H £25 for the delay in getting back to him. I think that was fair.

My final decision

I don't uphold the complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr H to accept or reject my decision before 12 December 2024.

Ray Lawley
Ombudsman