

The complaint

Mrs R complains that Clydesdale Bank Plc trading as Virgin Money misinformed her about the impact of a short term arrangement on her account and failed to offer her support appropriate for her circumstances.

What happened

Mrs R holds a credit card account with Virgin Money.

On 21 November 2024 Mrs R contacted Virgin Money and explained that she was in financial difficulties. She requested to pause her monthly payments. Virgin Money completed an income and expenditure assessment with Mrs R and offered her a short-term forbearance plan for 6 months.

Mrs R says that she was assured that her credit file wouldn't be affected by the forbearance plan. She also says that she made Virgin Money aware that she had a medical condition which meant that she couldn't engage in lengthy telephone conversations.

Mrs R discovered that her credit score dropped as a result of the forbearance plan. She complained to Virgin Money and said she'd been misled on the call when the plan was set up. She also said that she found the frequent calls from Virgin Money to her mobile and home phone harassing.

Virgin Money issued a final response on 14 June 2024. It said it had listened to the call dated 21 November 2023 and didn't agree that Mrs R hadn't been notified of the impact the plan would have on her credit file. Virgin Money said the agent had explained to Mrs R that the plan would be reported to the credit reference agencies and that if Mrs R failed to make her minimum monthly payments these would be noted as arrears. Virgin Money said it understood that Mrs R had requested an email with the contents of her conversation with them dated 23 April 2024. It said an email had been sent but apologised that Mrs R hadn't received it and said it would send it again. Virgin Money credited Mrs R's account with £50 by way of apology.

Mrs R remained unhappy and brought her complaint to this service. She says she was misled on the call where the forbearance plan was set up and wants her credit file amended.

Our investigator didn't uphold the complaint. He said he'd listened to the call, and he was satisfied that it was explained to Mrs R that the arrangement would impact her credit file. The investigator said he'd listened to a further call dated February 2024 where Mrs R was advised about the impact that a further arrangement would have on her credit file. The investigator said that he hadn't found any evidence of harassing phone calls to Mrs R. He said that Virgin Money had acknowledged that Mrs R had asked them to email the contents of the call dated April 2024 and that the compensation paid for the error in not sending it was fair.

Mrs R didn't agree. She said the calls she'd received from Virgin Money were harassment.

Because Mrs R didn't agree I've been asked to review the complaint.

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 know it will disappoint Mrs R but I agree with the investigators opinion. I'll explain why.

I've listened to the call dated 21 November 2023. Having done so, I'm satisfied that the agent explained to Mrs R that the forbearance plan would have an impact on her credit file. I can't agree with Mrs R when she says she was assured that her credit file wouldn't be impacted. During the call, Mrs R confirmed that she understood that because she wasn't going to be making any payments for six months, her account would fall into arrears and these arrears would be reported to the credit reference agencies.

Based on my review of the call, I haven't found any evidence that Mrs R was misled about the plan, or that she was misinformed about the impact that the plan would have on her credit file. I'm therefore unable to uphold this aspect of the complaint.

Mrs R has also complained that she was harassed by Virgin Money. She's said that she received frequent calls to her mobile and home phone.

I've reviewed the system notes, and I can see that Mrs R was contacted by Virgin Money in February 2024. The purpose of the call was to review the forbearance plan. Virgin Money has acknowledged that it called Mrs R again the following day in error. On this occasion, Mrs R was in the car with her children and wasn't aware what the call was about so was trying to complete security whilst driving. I appreciate that this caused Mrs R some distress, but on balance I'm unable to say that the calls amounted to harassment. I can't see that any further calls were made after this.

Mrs R has also raised concerns that Virgin Money failed to take account of her circumstances including her medical condition. I've listened to the call dated 21 November 2023 and I can't find any evidence that Mrs R made Virgin Money aware of her condition. During the call in February 2024, the agent acknowledged what Mrs R said about her condition and signposted her to a specialist support team. Mrs R declined the offer and said she was hoping for a positive outcome to her job search,

Based on what I've reviewed, Mrs R didn't make Virgin Money aware of her condition until the call in February 2024. I'm satisfied that Virgin Money offered appropriate support to Mrs R once they had been made aware.

I haven't found any evidence in either call that Mrs R made Virgin Money aware that she couldn't manage lengthy calls, or that she struggled to retain information. Because of this, I can't fairly say that Virgin Money had any reason to think that Mrs R couldn't understand the content of the calls, or remember what had been discussed.

Virgin Money has acknowledged that Mrs R asked them to email a transcript of the call and that this failed to reach Mrs R the first time it was sent. I understand that Virgin Money has re-sent the transcript. Virgin Money have apologised for any inconvenience caused to Mrs R by this and have offered compensation. Having considered everything, I think the compensation offered is fair. I won't be asking Mrs R to do anything further.

My final decision

My final decision is that I don't uphold the complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs R to accept or reject my decision before 23 April 2025.

Emma Davy
Ombudsman