

The complaint

Ms H has complained about her mortgage she holds with Barclays Bank UK PLC. Her complaint can be summarised under two broad points:

- Due to an error made by Barclays in November 2022, arrears were recorded on her credit file which she said ruined her credit rating and she's now unable to get credit.
- Ms H says that in early 2024 Barclays started to harass her again which she doesn't think is right as she was only one month in arrears. She's also unhappy arrears were recorded on her credit file from March 2024.

To put things right Ms H wants Barclays to write off her entire mortgage debt.

What happened

Ms H took this mortgage out in 2009. In November 2022 she switched to a new mortgage product and as part of that Barclays, in error, removed her mortgage current account credit limit. This led to arrears being reported to her credit file.

Ms H complained to Barclays in March 2023. Barclays issued a final response letter on 3 April 2023 in which it upheld the complaint. It apologised for the error and paid £500 compensation. It also amended the reporting to the credit reference agencies to remove the arrears it had reported and sent a letter to Ms H that she could provide to any of her other creditors which explained the reporting was a mistake by Barclays. The letter explained that Ms H had six months from the date of that letter to bring her complaint to us. If she didn't do so, and there were no exceptional circumstances, Barclays said that it wouldn't consent to us looking at the complaint. I will refer to this as "the 2023 complaint".

Ms H raised a further complaint in March 2024. In that she said she wasn't happy with the resolution to the 2023 complaint, and that Barclays had also started its constant harassment of her again. She said she'd received an arrears letter and wondered what Barclays had done to her credit rating.

Barclays issued its final response letter on 16 May 2024. In that it explained it had resumed collections activity on Ms H's account because she'd missed a payment in November 2023 which meant her account was now over one month in arrears. It said that until the arrears were repaid calls would be made to Ms H, and suggested she reinstate the direct debit on the account to ensure future payments were made in full and on time. It paid £100 compensation for not sending a letter to Ms H when she missed the November 2023 payment but said the information it had reported to the credit reference agencies was correct. Again, the letter explained that Ms H had six months from the date of that letter to bring her complaint to us. If she didn't do so, and there were no exceptional circumstances, Barclays said that it wouldn't consent to us looking at the complaint. I will refer to this as "the 2024 complaint".

Ms H referred her complaints to the Financial Ombudsman Service on 11 June 2024.

In August 2024, our Investigator said that we couldn't consider the 2023 complaint as Ms H hadn't referred that to us within the six months allowed under our rules. They said that as Ms H was in contact with Barclays, she could have referred the complaint to us. In respect of the 2024 complaint, our Investigator thought Barclays had already done enough to put things right.

Ms H said that Barclays was entirely responsible for damaging her credit score, and due to that she'd lost the ability to get credit (and her existing credit providers had now reduced her credit limits). She also said she was due to remortgage next year and this would have an impact on that. She said she didn't understand how Barclays wasn't culpable and thought her entire mortgage should be written off.

On 8 January 2025, a second Investigator reviewed the complaint and reiterated that we can't look at the 2023 complaint as it wasn't referred to us in time, and Barclays had reported correct information in respect of the 2024 complaint.

Ms H said she didn't agree and was going to make further submissions as our Investigators had missed the point. Two months have now passed, and various extensions to deadlines have been given. The last deadline was 17 March 2025 and Ms H responded this morning. In that email she reiterated what had happened in 2022, and the impact it had on her. She said it was all Barclays' fault and it should completely wipe her mortgage, as sending her £600 and a letter of apology was unacceptable. There was no further information from Ms H to explain why she felt our Investigators had missed the point, and the final deadline has now passed. We can't keep cases in abeyance indefinitely and so I'm now deciding the case based on what we already hold, including Ms H's email sent this morning.

I issued a decision earlier today about our jurisdiction in which I said we can't consider the 2023 complaint as that wasn't referred to us in time. I explained that meant I wouldn't be commenting on the mistake Barclays made in November 2022, the redress it offered for that, or the ongoing impact Ms H has said it has had. I said I would only be considering the 2024 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.

It isn't in dispute that Ms H has been in arrears for a number of years, albeit because the amount was less than one contractual monthly payment Barclays didn't carry out any collections activities nor was it reported to the credit reference agencies.

Ms H's direct debit was returned as unpaid in February, July, August and September 2023 which led to the direct debit being cancelled. Those payments were made manually by Ms H.

Barclays wrote to Ms H on 27 October 2023 to explain the direct debit had been cancelled, and so she was aware she would need to make manual payments going forward.

Unfortunately, no payment was made in November 2023 so that missing payment, combined with the historical arrears balance, meant Ms H's account was now over one month in arrears at the end of each month. Ms H then made a short payment in March 2024 (paying £1,013 rather than £1,672) which led to her account being over one month in arrears for the entirety of each month. On 1 March the arrears were £2,687, on 4 March the arrears were reduced to £1,674 (when Ms H made her payment) and on 31 March they went up to £3,346 (when the next instalment was due). The monthly instalment was £1,672. As this was over

one month in arrears, collections activity was triggered. This would involve calls and letters to Ms H as well as the arrears situation being reported on her credit file.

Barclays has admitted it made a mistake as it seems a letter wasn't sent to Ms H when her November 2023 payment was missed and for that it paid £100 compensation. But, like our Investigator, I don't think the situation would have been materially different even if that letter had been sent to Ms H as she was aware of the situation from the beginning of March 2024 as a letter was sent to her dated 6 March 2024, but the arrears weren't paid until July 2024. Further letters about the arrears were also sent on 15 March, 2 April and 14 June 2024. I can see that Barclays didn't start to report the arrears until March 2024, which seems fair bearing in mind Barclays didn't notify Ms H about the situation until the start of March 2024.

Barclays reported the account as being one month in arrears between March and June 2024. Barclays has a responsibility to report accurate information to the credit reference agencies, as it has done. There are no grounds for me to order Barclays to amend Ms H's credit file information in respect of the 2024 complaint as it is a true reflection of the conduct of her account at that time. If Ms H wants to add an explanation to her credit file, she can contact the credit reference agencies directly and ask to add a notice of correction, that way other lenders can read her explanation for the situation when they are deciding whether to lend. But I can't order Barclays to remove the markers as they're an accurate representation of what happened.

Barclays has paid £100 compensation for its mistake in not sending a letter to Ms H to notify her that she'd missed her November 2023 payment, and having considered everything I'm satisfied that is fair redress for that and so I don't order Barclays to do anything further.

My final decision

I don't uphold this complaint as I'm satisfied Barclays Bank UK PLC has already done enough to put things right.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Ms H to accept or reject my decision before 16 April 2025.

Julia Meadows
Ombudsman