

## The complaint

Mr H complains that PROPEL HOLDINGS (UK) LIMITED trading as Quidmarket ("Quidmarket") lent to him irresponsibly.

## What happened

Mr H took three loans and I have done this table to show the lending history.

Loan	Approved	Amount	Terms (rounded figures)	Status
1	13 October 2023	£300	£92 each month x 6	Repaid 28 March 2024 on time
2	29 March 2024	£400	£131 each month x 6	Repaid 30 September 2024
3	3 October 2024	£600	£48 each week x 25 weeks	Due to end April 2025. It is still outstanding.

After Mr H had complained in December 2024 Quidmarket responded and offered to waive the rest of the interest due on Loan 3. Mr H did not accept this offer and referred his complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service where one of our investigators considered it.

Our investigator thought that Quidmarket should put things right for Mr H for Loans 2 and 3. Mr H agreed and Quidmarket disagreed. So, the unresolved complaint was referred to me to decide.

It seems that Loan 1 was undisputed and so the loans I reviewed are Loans 2 and 3. In January 2025 the offer to waive the contractual interest on Loan 3 remained 'on the table'.

On 10 September 2025 I issued a provisional decision setting out my reasons and the outcome. This is duplicated here for ease of reading.

### What I've provisionally 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. We've set out our general approach to complaints about short-term lending - including all the relevant rules, guidance and good industry practice - on our website.

Quidmarket had to assess the lending to check if Mr H could afford to pay back the amounts he'd borrowed without undue difficulty. It needed to do this in a way which was proportionate to the circumstances. Quidmarket's checks could have taken into account a number of different things, such as how much was being lent, the size of the repayments, and Mr H's income and expenditure.

With this in mind, I think in the early stages of a lending relationship, less thorough checks might have been proportionate. But certain factors might suggest Quidmarket should have done more to establish that any lending was sustainable for Mr H. These factors include:

- Mr H having a low income (reflecting that it could be more difficult to make any loan repayments to a given loan amount from a lower level of income);
- The amounts to be repaid being especially high (reflecting that it could be more difficult to meet a higher repayment from a particular level of income);
- Mr H having a large number of loans and/or having these loans over a long period of time (reflecting the risk that repeated refinancing may signal that the borrowing had become, or was becoming, unsustainable);
- Mr H coming back for loans shortly after previous borrowing had been repaid (also suggestive of the borrowing becoming unsustainable).

There may even come a point where the lending history and pattern of lending itself clearly demonstrates that the lending was unsustainable for Mr H. I do not consider that this series of loans for Mr H led to a pattern of lending. There are too few and the period was one year.

Quidmarket was required to establish whether Mr H could sustainably repay the loans – not just whether he technically had enough money to make his repayments. Having enough money to make the repayments could of course be an indicator that Mr H was able to repay his loan sustainably. But it doesn't automatically follow that this is the case.

## **Loan 2**

Mr H applied for Loan 2. Mr H's declared income was verified by Quidmarket at £1,850. Mr H said he was living at home with his parents and that he paid around £200 towards 'rent' and household bills. He had listed his monthly food and travel costs as being £150 which Quidmarket increased in the income and expenditure (I&E) assessment it carried out to £300.

Mr H had repaid Loan 1 successfully and on time with no issues. How an applicant has managed a previous loan is a relevant and useful element of any creditworthiness assessment for a lender.

Quidmarket did not need to do a credit search – the regulations do not require it - but having done one then Quidmarket needed to heed what that information presented. Mr H had said he had no existing credit repayments to which he was committed. Quidmarket found otherwise and increased his repayment figure each month to £309.

I have been sent a copy of that credit search dated 28 March 2024. Mr H's overall debt was £3,551. I consider that to have been relatively modest especially as a large part of that was a mail order account. He had nine active accounts (which would have included the current accounts). He'd opened seven accounts in the previous six months. And he did have some relatively low level adverse data recorded in relation to a late payment. Looking at the detail that appears to have been for the mail order account: one late payment three months ago and since then Mr H had paid it down. But Mr H had no county Court Judgment debts, no delinquencies or insolvency history and had repaid all his accounts successfully apart from the one mail order account.

Reviewing all the open accounts, Mr H did appear to have opened several loan accounts in October 2023 each of which had one or two repayments left to make and one of which was the successfully repaid Quidmarket Loan 1. Mr H opened one loan account in November 2023 which had three repayments left on it and one loan account taken in December 2023 which Mr H had paid off. However, no further ones had been opened in 2024.

Mr H's I&E resulted in him having a significant part of his income left over – around £1,041 – with which to pay the Loan 2 repayments.

Mr H has told us that he had a tendency towards compulsive spending on betting and gambling. But having reviewed all that Mr H had told Quidmarket, combined with the research it had done, then with a disposable income of over £1,000 I do not consider that Quidmarket would have thought he was in any sort of financial difficulties. His credit account use mainly was for a mail order which does not usually lead a potential lender to think that may indicate compulsive spending.

I don't consider that it needed to have carried out any further checks, and Quidmarket would not have seen his bank account transactions. So, although Mr H has sent us some copies, I

have not reviewed them for this period as I do not consider that Quidmarket needed to have done. It carried out proportionate checks.

Our investigator's view was that there had been quick take up of the loans and I have thought about. But as demonstrated by Mr H's credit report obtained by Quidmarket, he'd taken a few before Christmas and none since then. And so, I don't consider that is such a quick take up of credit that Loan 2 ought to have been refused.

I plan not to uphold the complaint about Loan 2.

### **Loan 3**

I'm conscious that Quidmarket's offer on Loan 3 remains open to Mr H. I don't know the current status of that loan.

This was an expensive loan as many high cost short term instalment loans are. There are FCA regulated cost cap controls but still this £600 loan was scheduled to be a total amount repayable of £1,199.75. The offer from Quidmarket was a potentially valuable offer.

Mr H had declared to Quidmarket much the same information as before save that he'd given a higher figure of £300 a month for food and travel. And Quidmarket, using its own research, increased his figure on existing credit commitments from £0 to £469 each month. These figures were calculated to leave Mr H with around £831 of money left over after he'd paid down what he needed to have repaid.

Quidmarket carried out a credit search on 2 October 2024, and I have reviewed that. Mr H's overall debt had increased to around £5,347. The mail order account had deteriorated in that now it was over its limit and Mr H had had two further late payment situations with it since the Quidmarket Loan 2.

Further, Mr H had taken a new loan each month for the previous few months. So, the combined picture was now one which I don't think could be ignored. I think that Quidmarket could have asked Mr H where his money was going. Or it could have viewed some bank account statements.

However, the ones Mr H has sent do not show me the full picture. In the lead up to the 3 October 2024 application to Quidmarket, Mr H does not appear to make numerous gambling transactions, as Mr H has told us he did, and he has other accounts into which he was transferring money. One was a savings account and it seems to have been with the same bank and that savings account balance is shown as £0 which suggests he was just moving money around.

The Loan 3 approved funds were not credited to the account for which Mr H has provided copy statements, and so I doubt that these would be the copy bank statements he'd provide to Quidmarket if it had asked. Further, as I have no idea as to the contents of, or the payment behaviour and how Mr H used his other current account(s) then I can't assess it further.

From what I have seen and from the evidence provided by Mr H then I'd not expect Quidmarket to reach a conclusion that he was unable to afford the loan. So, I plan not to uphold the complaint about Loan 3.

However, Quidmarket's offer may still be available.

This is the end of the duplicated provisional decision.

### **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.

Quidmarket replied immediately it had received my provisional decision to say that the offer it had made before remained available. Quidmarket confirmed:

*'I can confirm we are happy with the decision not to change the outcome and that it*

*would be recorded as such.*

*We can confirm the offer to waive £599.75 remains valid and no further repayments have been made since the business file was issued.'*

We received Quidmarket's business file on 15 January 2025.

I wrote to Mr H to inform him what Quidmarket is willing to do, but I've had no reply.

Considering I've received no additional submissions or evidence from Mr H then my reasoning and the outcome set out in my provisional decision remains unchanged. I do not uphold the complaint.

In light of Quidmarket's offer then I recommend that Mr H contacts it directly.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that I do not uphold the complaint. If Mr H wishes to accept the offer from Quidmarket he needs to approach it directly.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr H to accept or reject my decision before 22 October 2025.

Rachael Williams  
**Ombudsman**