

The complaint

Miss C complains that Barclays Bank UK PLC, trading as Barclaycard, is unfairly reporting adverse information to Credit Reference Agencies (“CRAs”).

What happened

Miss C held a credit card account with Barclaycard. The account defaulted in October 2023, the outstanding debt was sold to a third-party, who I’ll refer to as “P”, in July 2024.

In October 2024, Miss C complained to Barclaycard. She said it was incorrectly reporting a default to CRAs in relation to the credit card; Miss C said P was reporting a default too, and she shouldn’t have two defaults for the same debt. Miss C said this issue was preventing her from obtaining a mortgage so, in resolution, she wanted Barclaycard to stop reporting a default to CRAs and remove any record of it from her credit file.

Barclaycard reviewed what had happened but, overall, was satisfied that it had correctly reported Miss C’s account. It said that it had correctly registered a default when Miss C’s account initially defaulted, and it had updated this record – to “satisfied as sold” – once it had sold the account to P. Barclaycard did, though, offer to pay Miss C £75 in compensation for some administrative issues she’d encountered.

Miss C remained unhappy. She still considered it the case that two, separate, defaults had been recorded for the same debt; something she considered unfair. So, she brought her complaint to this Service for independent review. An Investigator here reviewed what had happened; having done so, they didn’t think Barclaycard needed to take any further action. In short, the Investigator said:

- Miss C hadn’t provided a full copy of her credit file but, from the limited information available, Barclaycard appeared to be reporting things correctly.
- Barclaycard had been able to provide a screenshot which demonstrated how the original default had been recorded in October 2023, and that the record had been updated as of July 2024 to show the account had been sold.
- Barclaycard wasn’t still reporting the account in default. Instead, it was reporting that the account was satisfied.
- Overall, based on the limited information available, Barclaycard didn’t appear to have done anything wrong. The account wasn’t being reported incorrectly.

Miss C disagreed. She maintained that two different defaults, for the same debt, were being reported to CRAs. So, she asked for an Ombudsman’s decision and her complaint has now been passed to me.

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.

To begin, I think it worth explaining that my review here focusses only on the actions of Barclaycard; not P, nor any other firm – like specific CRAs, for example – involved with what's happened here. As I understand it, Miss C is pursuing another complaint against P and, to be clear, I make no comment on that. That said, for completeness, I have reviewed information provided by P to ensure nothing's missed.

Having done so, I agree with the findings of our Investigator for much the same reasons they provided in their assessment. Looking at what's been reported to CRAs by Barclaycard, the default was recorded in October 2023 – which I understand to be correct – and the debt sale recorded as of July 2024. Again, from the detail I have available, that's accurate.

I appreciate Miss C holds a strong belief that she's had two different defaults for the same debt but, looking at the entries from both Barclaycard and P, they have the same start date, the same default date and the same default amount. So, together, that reflects how the credit card account was defaulted whilst with Barclaycard – which is true – and that it was then sold on to P, who continued to report the status of the account under its own record.

Ultimately, businesses are required to report accurate information on a customer's credit file. As I've set out above, Barclaycard recorded the default and then, later, recorded the sale of the debt to P; Barclaycard subsequently amended its record to "satisfied". And while Miss C hasn't provided a copy of her full credit file, the screenshots she's sent us suggest that too. That's in line with the guidance stipulated by the Information Commissioner's Office. So, overall, I think Barclaycard has reported accurate information and nothing – at least in the information I have – indicates otherwise.

With that in mind, I can't fairly conclude that Barclaycard has done something wrong; it follows that I don't uphold the complaint or require Barclaycard to take any further action. That, of course, also means I can't find Barclaycard responsible for any issues Miss C has had with her mortgage application. The available evidence simply doesn't support that conclusion.

In closing, I'll reiterate that I make no finding on what P's reported – nor on how different credit reference agencies, or other organisations which offer a broad view of all CRA reporting, might present information on *their* platform. Those are separate issues which Miss C can follow-up, should she choose to do so. I did note that Miss C has queried this matter already with a particular platform she uses to view her credit information; that firm provided a response, and it also has information on its website. So, Miss C can contact that firm again if she wants to find out more.

Additionally, I'll also mention here that Miss C may wish to consider asking to register a "notice of correction" with Credit Reference Agencies (CRAs). In essence, that's a short explanatory note which Miss C can request is added to an entry on her credit file; it explains the background to that entry. Any firm who searches her credit report should then see the notice.

I'll be clear that I can't guarantee individual CRAs will allow Miss C to do this – that's for them to determine. I should explain too that any prospective lenders will each consider a notice like this differently; it isn't a guarantee that any potential new lender will agree to provide credit. But given how strongly Miss C feels here, it is an option for her.

As a final point, I'll mention that I did note how it's unclear whether Miss C ever accepted the £75 offered to her for the administrative issues she encountered. So, if she does wish to accept that – if she hasn't already done so – she can contact Barclaycard directly.

My final decision

My final decision is that I don't uphold Miss C's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss C to accept or reject my decision before 29 May 2025.

Simon Louth
Ombudsman