

The complaint

Mr S is unhappy TRANSUNION INTERNATIONAL UK LIMITED, trading as TransUnion (TU) reported a third-party's information on his credit file.

What happened

In late May 2024 Mr S was informed by his credit card provider that they had reduced his credit limit from £5,000 to £100. Because of this Mr S checked the Credit Reference Agency (CRA) that the lender used – TU – and found his brother's information being reported on his own credit file.

Mr S raised a dispute and a complaint with TU before the end of May 2024, and in mid-June 2024 TU had requested that Mr S and his brother's files be separated. The file separation was confirmed to Mr S on 24 June 2024.

TU apologised for what had happened, but unhappy with TU's response Mr S referred the matter to our service.

The Investigator explained that TU's systems had automatically merged the information of Mr S and his brother due to some similarities and noted that TU accepted the error was on their part. The Investigator considered the impact to Mr S and concluded £200 was a fair sum in the circumstances to recognise the trouble and upset the matter had caused Mr S.

TU accepted the proposed resolution, but Mr S did not. Mr S said this did not go far enough to acknowledging the financial burden the error had cost him. Mr S said his credit card lender had told him the reduction was due to a credit search so he had to borrow from friends and family at a difficult family time. Mr S also expressed his concern that the data could have been leaked to a person not part of his family which could have been far more detrimental.

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.

While I may not respond to each individual point raised and I've only included a summary of what's happened above, I assure both parties I've reviewed all their submissions and I have focused on what I consider to be relevant to reaching a fair and reasonable resolution in the circumstances of this matter.

It's not disputed that something went wrong here given TU's automated system for returning and reporting data wrongly merged Mr S's credit file with information belonging to his brother. TU have apologised for this and corrected things. So what is left for me to decide is whether the proposed £200 is fair to recognise the impact this matter has had on Mr S.

Understandably this has upset Mr S, and he has expressed his concern that if the error had resulted in an unknown third-party accessing his information the consequences could've been far more serious. Mr S has also said the drop in his credit limit has put him in a worse financial position as he has had to borrow money from friends and family at a time when he needed access to funds due to family circumstances.

When determining a financial award for the distress and inconvenience caused to someone our service considers such things as the time taken to sort out a mistake, the impact to someone's health and whether there was anything an individual may have been able to do in order to reduce the impact of the business's mistake.

In this case I think it's fair to say once Mr S became aware of the problem he did not lose time in telling TU what had happened, and they took reasonable steps to resolve the issue so it was corrected within a reasonable time.

I acknowledge Mr S's concerns that the consequences of what happened could have been far greater if someone else unknown to him wrongly had access to his information, so I do not dismiss the importance of what Mr S has said; however, I'm unable to award any compensation for something that did not happen. I also do not have the authority to fine or punish a firm, or interfere with its policies, systems or controls – those are considerations for the appropriate regulator. I note Mr S is already aware he is able to approach the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) who regulate and uphold information rights in the public interest. That is something he would need to do separately if he has not already done so.

Mr S has said he was impacted because his credit card limit was significantly reduced. As our Investigator explained, there are numerous considerations lenders take into account when deciding to provide someone with credit. Each lender will have their own criteria and resources to determine their decision to lend, and typically this will include information held on a person's credit file. But based on what has been shared, there is not enough to persuade me in this particular case that TU can reasonably be held solely and directly responsible for the drop in Mr S's credit limit. I also note it is possible for individuals to request a lender review their credit limit manually in such cases, but any decision as to whether to provide credit or to increase an existing credit limit would remain at the lender's discretion.

My findings here are not intended to be dismissive of the distress this matter has caused Mr S - I recognise how important a person's financial standing and creditworthiness is to someone and the importance that the data being used to support this be appropriately protected. And I am sorry to learn of health problems within Mr S's family which meant these events happened at a more difficult time for him. I've also considered the matter was contained and resolved within a reasonable time and taking everything into account, I think the £200 is fair to recognise the upset caused to Mr S by these events.

Putting things right

TRANSUNION INTERNATIONAL UK LIMITED, trading as TransUnion should pay Mr S £200.

My final decision

For the reasons above my final decision is that Mr S's complaint is upheld and TRANSUNION INTERNATIONAL UK LIMITED, trading as TransUnion should put things right as I've described above.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr S to accept or

reject my decision before 14 July 2025.

Kristina Mathews
Ombudsman