

Complaint

Mr R has complained about a credit card Madison CF UK Limited (trading as “118 118 Money”) provided to him.

He says that he shouldn’t have been given the credit card and that it was irresponsibly provided to him.

Background

In December 2021, 118 118 Money provided Mr R with a credit card which had a limit of £1,200.00. Mr R wasn’t provided with any credit limit increases.

One of our investigators reviewed what Mr R and 118 118 Money had told us. And she thought 118 118 Money hadn’t done anything wrong or treated Mr R unfairly in deciding to provide the credit card.

So he didn’t recommend that Mr R’s complaint be upheld. Mr R disagreed and asked for an ombudsman to look at the complaint.

My findings

I’ve considered all the available evidence and arguments to decide what’s fair and reasonable in the circumstances of this complaint.

Having carefully considered everything, I’ve decided not to uphold Mr R’s complaint. I’ll explain why in a little more detail.

We’ve explained how we handle complaints about unaffordable and irresponsible lending on our website. And I’ve used this approach to help me decide Mr R’s complaint.

118 118 Money needed to make sure it didn’t lend irresponsibly. In practice, what this means is 118 118 Money needed to carry out proportionate checks to be able to understand whether Mr R could afford to repay any credit it provided.

Our website sets out what we typically think about when deciding whether a lender’s checks were proportionate. Generally, we don’t think that it is necessarily unreasonable for a lender’s checks to be less detailed – in terms of how much information it gathers and what it does to verify it – in the early stages of a lending relationship.

But we might think it needed to do more if, for example, a borrower’s income was low or the amount lent was high. And the longer the lending relationship goes on, the greater the risk of it becoming unsustainable and the borrower experiencing financial difficulty. So we’d expect a lender to be able to show that it didn’t continue to lend to a customer irresponsibly.

118 118 Money says it agreed to Mr R’s application after it obtained information on his income and carried out a credit search on him. And the information it obtained indicated that Mr R would be able to make the, what it considered to be, the not especially large monthly

repayment required to clear the balance that could be owed within a reasonable period of time.

On the other hand, Mr R says that he shouldn't have been lent to.

I've considered what the parties have said.

What's important to note is that Mr R was provided with a revolving credit facility rather than a loan. And this means that 118 118 Money was required to understand whether a credit limit of £1,200.00 could be repaid within a reasonable period of time, rather than in one go. I think it's fair to say that a credit limit of £1,200.00 did not require large monthly payments in order to clear the full amount that could be owed within a reasonable period of time.

I've seen the information 118 118 Money obtained from Mr R about his income and what was on the credit search carried out. 118 118 Money says that Mr R declared he was full time employed with monthly earnings of just over £1,300.00 monthly. I understand that this is likely to have been cross checked against information from credit reference agencies and therefore, I'm satisfied that 118 118 Money was entitled to rely on this declaration.

The credit search showed that Mr R didn't have any significant adverse information – such as defaulted accounts or County Court Judgments – recorded against him either. Furthermore, the amount Mr R owed already appears to have been relatively low at just under £6,000.00 and even then Mr R wasn't using all of his available credit either.

It's also worth noting that 118 118 Money used statistical data to work out Mr R's living expenses. This will have included things like payments to utilities and council tax, which given he declared he was living at home with parents, is likely to have been higher than what Mr R was actually paying. So I'm not persuaded by the argument that Mr R would not have sufficient funds left over to cover other expenses once the monthly payment that could be due for this card was deducted from his calculated disposable income.

For the sake of completeness, I would also add that even if I were to agree that 118 118 Money ought to have done more in this instance, it's also not even immediately apparent to me that further checks would have made a difference. I say this because I think that further checks would, at the absolute maximum, have consisted of finding out more about Mr R's living expenses rather than relying on statistical data.

Yet I've not been provided with anything to show that Mr R's non-credit related committed expenditure was significantly higher than the estimates that 118 118 Money relied on. In these circumstances, I don't think that 118 118 Money finding out more about Mr R's actual living expenses would, in any event, have resulted in it determining that Mr R would be unable to make the monthly payment he could have had to make as a result of using the credit available to him on this card.

In reaching my conclusions, I've also considered whether the lending relationship between 118 118 Money and Mr R might have been unfair to Mr R under s140A of the Consumer Credit Act 1974 ("CCA").

However, for the reasons I've explained, I've not been persuaded that 118 118 Money irresponsibly lent to Mr R or otherwise treated him unfairly in relation to this matter. And I haven't seen anything to suggest that s140A CCA or anything else would, given the facts of this complaint, lead to a different outcome here.

So overall and having considered everything I don't think that 118 118 Money treated Mr R unfairly or unreasonably in approving his application for his credit card. I appreciate this will

be very disappointing for Mr R. But I hope he'll understand the reasons for my decision and that he'll at least feel his concerns have been listened to.

My final decision

For the reasons I've explained, I'm not upholding Mr R's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr R to accept or reject my decision before 11 August 2025.

Jeshen Narayanan
Ombudsman