

## The complaint

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

## What happened

I've done a table summarising the lending approved by Quidmarket. I've not filled in all the details as most of the complaint has been resolved. I explain below.

Loan	Approved	Amount	Terms months	Monthly repayment	Closed
1	8 October 2021	£300	3	Not inputted	28 January 2022
2	16 March 2022	£400	3	Not inputted	28 March 2022
3	29 March 2022	£600	5	Not inputted	27 May 2022
4	13 June 2022	£700	5	£229.46	28 June 2022
Seven month gap					
5	13 February 2023	£500	5	£163.28	28 February 2023
6	7 March 2023	£500	5	£171.01	28 March 2023
7	1 April 2023	£400	3	Not inputted	28 April 2023
8	5 May 2023	£500	5	Not inputted	27 May 2023
9	7 July 2023	£450	5	Not inputted	28 July 2023
10	4 January 2024	£500	5	Not inputted	30 March 2024
11	16 April 2024	£400	3	Not inputted	26 April 2024
12	20 August 2024	£400	3	Not inputted	20 August 2024
13	18 October 2024	£500	3	Not inputted	28 November 2024
14	4 December 2024*	£500	5	Not inputted	owing in September 2025

Mr S repaid Loan 1 a little late, he withdrew from two loans (loans 11 and 12) and repaid the remaining ten of the other loans early. Loan 14 remained outstanding at the time of the complaint and still was in September 2025.

After Mr S had complained, Quidmarket issued its final response letter (FRL) in December 2024 and it upheld his complaint for Loans 11 to 14 inclusive. It also offered to waive the interest due on the remaining outstanding loan (Loan 14). It calculated the redress on loans 11 to 13 and offset it against the principal balance still left to pay on Loan 14. That left Mr S with £344.72 left to pay at the time of the FRL in December 2024. Recently Quidmarket has clarified for me that no further payments have been made since its FRL.

Quidmarket also offered to remove those loans from his credit file in line with the approach we usually take for upholds where repetitive lending had been identified.

Mr S referred his complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service and one of our investigators reviewed the complaint. So, Mr S did not accept that offer but Quidmarket's concession for those loans would have been noted by the investigator. The outcome from our investigator's assessment was that she considered Quidmarket had not lent irresponsibly for the first three loans, but she did consider that Quidmarket had got it wrong for Loans 4 to 9 inclusive.

Mr S seems to have accepted the outcome in our investigator's view so that leads me to conclude that he has no issue with the non-uphold outcome for Loans 1, 2 and 3. These would not be challenged by Quidmarket as they are non-upholds and so I consider there's no remaining dispute about those loans. I will not review them.

Quidmarket disagreed with our investigator's view in relation to Loans 4, 5 and 6, but accepted the uphold view from Loan 7. In the circumstances Loans 7 to 14 are not disputed and I will not review them, but I have included them in the table (greyed out) as they form the overall picture of lending.

From the responses by Quidmarket and Mr S the loans in dispute are Loans 4, 5 and 6. On 29 September 2025 I issued a provisional decision giving reasons why I considered that the complaint about loans 4, 5 & 6 ought not to be upheld. The other loans – 7 to 14 – remained as agreed upholds.

Both parties have agreed to this and therefore I am issuing my final decision. So, the provisional decision will be duplicated in the next section followed by the redress at the end.

### **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.

#### **What I provisionally decided on 29 September 2025 – 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 S 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 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 Consumer. These factors include:

- 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);
- 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);
- 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 S. In fairness to Quidmarket it has accepted that loans 7 to 14 ought not to have been lent to Mr S for those reasons. Quidmarket is aware of our approach to these types of multiple lending complaints and I have read all the submissions it has sent to us since our investigator sent her view.

I've considered all the arguments, evidence and information provided in this context, and thought about what this means for Mr S' complaint. As I have said earlier, I am reviewing Loans 4, 5 and 6. For each of these three loans Mr S had declared net income figures of £5,700, £6,400 and £6,500 respectively. Quidmarket has explained that it would have verified these figures using an electronic verification process. I don't consider this out of the ordinary.

It checked Mr S' bank details which likely would have been a form of identity check. And it has said that on occasions it has checked Mr S' employment details. In relation to Mr S' applications for Loans 4, 8, 9, 10 & 14 he provided bank statements to Quidmarket which were additional checks carried out before lending.

Quidmarket has carried out a credit check for each of the loan applications. Doing that is not a regulatory requirement but is often done by lenders. And having obtained that information I'd expect it to have taken heed of the information presented to it.

I have noted that there was a seven month gap between Mr S' paying off Loan 4 and applying for Loan 5. This does make a difference as to how Quidmarket's approach is viewed by us as part of the complaint assessment. We would consider a gap of over six months or so to be a significant break in lending. Quidmarket is aware of that and I've seen it has made submissions on that point.

For the loans I am being asked to review – Loans 4, 5 & 6 - I disagree with the investigator's view and I have chosen to issue a provisional decision in which I give my reasons for coming to a different outcome for these three loans.

#### **Loan 4**

Loan 4 was applied for in June 2022. Mr S having paid off Loans 2 and 3 early.

Mr S' income verified by Quidmarket was £5,700 after tax. Mr S said he was employed full time. Mr S had said he was renting and his monthly rental cost was £850. He lived there with another as he declared there were two people in the household and no dependents.

Mr S said to Quidmarket that he had monthly utility costs of £500, plus food & travel costs of £650 each month.

Mr S had declared he had no credit commitment outgoings but after Quidmarket had carried out a credit search (which I come on to later in this part of the decision) it inserted a figure of just over £468 a month for the income and expenditure (I&E) it carried out before lending.

So, Mr S' total usual outgoings were calculated as £2,000. Plus, Quidmarket factored in that he had to pay around £468 a month for his existing credit commitments. That would have left Mr S with around £3,232 left with which to repay the monthly Loan 4 instalments.

A copy of the Credit Reference Agency (CRA) report has been provided to me and I have reviewed it. Plus, Quidmarket chose to carry out an additional check which was to ask Mr S for copies of his recent bank account statements. I have reviewed copies of those as well. They covered the period 9 May to 8 June 2022.

The CRA report dated June 2022 showed that Mr S had an overall debt balance of £1,894 nearly all of which was for loans. He had six active accounts of which three had been opened in the previous three months and of which one would have been the Quidmarket Loan 3. Mr S had very little adverse data on the report (one late payment in the previous 12 months which

I consider minor) and in my view his overall debt level was relatively modest. Mr S had several closed accounts none of which looked to have had any repayment problems. But successfully paying off previous loans does not lead me to consider that Quidmarket ought to have been alerted to a concern. And these details combined with the disposable income figure it had calculated would not have led Quidmarket to think he was in difficulties with his finances.

Mr S' bank statements show that his income was £5,700 and so Quidmarket's verification had been correct. Mr S was paying more to lenders (cards and loans) than the £468 Quidmarket had used – it was more like £1,000. Mr S paid significant sums to one or possibly two individuals with the same surname as him but I don't read those payments as being credit commitments. And Quidmarket is correct when it states that the bank statements showed no signs of usual financial difficulty such as returned direct debits, or excessive payments to creditors or debt management payments or permanently being in an overdraft.

I do not consider that Mr S was experiencing financial difficulties as described for the purposes of the regulatory framework surrounding irresponsible lending. Mr S could afford this loan.

Quidmarket carried out additional checks as well as the ones it usually did and deduced he could afford Loan 4. I plan not to uphold the complaint about Loan 4.

### **Loan 5**

This was the first in the new lending chain after a seven month gap.

Mr S' income was verified as £6,400. This was a loan for £500 and it would not have been considered unreasonable for Quidmarket to have treated Mr S as a new customer. By that we mean reliance on the information Mr S had provided to it upon application for Loan 5 would have been considered appropriate. In any event Quidmarket verified his income and carried out a credit search.

Mr S had declared his monthly rent was £900 and his monthly utilities cost was £2,000 plus his food and travel was £1,000. So, his outgoings were declared as £4,150 including the amount Mr S had declared as his credit commitment costs of £250 a month. Quidmarket did a CRA search (which I refer to later in the decision) and increased that credit commitment cost to £521 a month. So, the I&E Quidmarket did left the other figures unchanged and calculated that his overall costs each month were £4,421. With the verified salary of £6,400 then Mr S looked to have a disposable income of £1,979 each month and the loan repayments for just over £163 a month for five months looked easily affordable.

In any event, Quidmarket carried out a CRA check and I have been sent a copy of the one dated February 2023. Mr S had some outstanding loans with no repayment issues, a relatively modest overall debt balance, current accounts with no issues, credit cards with low credit limits and very low outstanding balances plus one account which looked like he did not use. That was an account with a £5,000 credit limit/overdraft facility he'd taken in October 2022 and only one repayment had been made and the balance was £0.

One telecoms account had had a late repayment on it 13 months before. I do not consider that would have been something Quidmarket would have been concerned about because it had been some time before and likely when it had lent to Mr S in the past. It had not concerned Quidmarket then and so it was not likely to have raised a concern in February 2023. There were no other types of adverse data on his credit file at all.

These details together with the I&E information it had would not lead me to consider that Quidmarket ought to have been prompted to have carried out additional checks. Quidmarket carried out proportionate checks and I plan not to uphold the complaint about Loan 5.

### **Loan 6**

Mr S paid off Loan 5 early and then applied for Loan 6 a few days later which was for a lesser sum and he wanted a three month term which was shorter than for Loan 5.

Most of the details surrounding the I&E and the credit report research were much the same as for Loan 5. Mr S had declared fewer monthly costs than for loan 5 but even if Quidmarket had used the figures he'd declared for Loan 5 when carrying out the assessment for Loan 6 then still Quidmarket would have deduced that Loan 6 was affordable.

I've reviewed the credit report it obtained in March 2023 and it was much the same as before. Mr S' overall debt had decreased slightly.

Quidmarket carried out proportionate checks and I plan not to uphold the complaint about Loan 6.

The other loans are ones for which Quidmarket has agreed to put things right for Mr S. Quidmarket has accepted that it ought to put things right for Loans 7 to 14 inclusive but the redress set out in the investigator's view was not quite correct in relation to the credit file amendment. So, I have corrected that. I know Quidmarket would do the usual loan removal for repeat lending uphold complaints anyway, but I have set it out here for completeness.

This is the end of the duplicated provisional decision.

Both parties have agreed to this and so I have no reason to depart from these findings and the outcome is the same – I do not uphold the complaint about Loans 4, 5 and 6. The resolutions for loans 1, 2 and 3 were clear following the investigator's view. Quidmarket had agreed to the uphold for loans 7 to 14.

### **Putting things right**

Loan 14 remains outstanding. Quidmarket needs to:

A) add together the total of the repayments made by Mr S towards interest, fees and charges on the Loans 7 to 13 inclusive, including payments made to a third party where applicable, but not including anything it has already refunded. For the outstanding loan 14, Quidmarket needs to remove the interest from it and treat any payments made as reduction of the capital balance of £500.

B) calculate 8% simple interest\* on the individual payments made by Mr S which were considered as part of "A", calculated from the date Mr S originally made the payments, to the date the complaint is settled.

C) pay Mr S the total of "A" plus "B" but Quidmarket is able to use the redress funds to offset the sums owed to it on Loan 14 – if applicable – before paying anything to Mr S. If any capital balance remains outstanding on the last loan, then an affordable and suitable payment plan ought to be arranged with Mr S.

D) the overall pattern of Mr S' borrowing for loans 7 to 14 means any information recorded about them is adverse, so it should remove these loans entirely from Mr S' credit file. This ought to include Loan 14 once repaid.

\*HM Revenue & Customs usually requires Quidmarket to deduct tax from this interest. It should give Mr S a certificate showing how much tax it has deducted, if he asks for one.

I've considered whether the relationship between Mr S and Quidmarket might have been unfair under Section 140A of the Consumer Credit Act 1974. However, I'm satisfied the redress I have directed should be carried out for Mr S results in fair compensation for him in

the circumstances of his complaint. I'm satisfied, based on what I've seen, that no additional award would be appropriate in this case.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that the complaint is upheld in part and I direct PROPEL HOLDINGS (UK) LIMITED trading as Quidmarket to do as I have outlined in the 'putting things right' part of the decision.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr S to accept or reject my decision before 28 October 2025.

Rachael Williams  
**Ombudsman**