

## **The complaint**

Mrs M complains that Secure Trust Bank Plc incorrectly searched her credit report.

## **What happened**

Mrs M applied for motor finance with Secure Trust Bank (trading as Moneyway). The application was made via a credit broker called Hippo Vehicle Solutions Ltd.

Mrs M complained to Secure Trust Bank. She said that on the day she submitted her application for finance there was an issue with the system which resulted in three applications being submitted rather than one which had resulted in 30 credit searches being carried out against her credit file between 15 January 2024 and 15 May 2024.

Secure Trust Bank didn't uphold the complaint. It said it had received two separate applications for finance from Mrs M via Hippo Vehicle Solutions which were both conducted on 15 May 2024, one via its Moneyway product and the other through its V12 product. Both applications were declined. Secure Trust Bank said it hadn't carried out 30 searches and that it hadn't made any errors.

Mrs M remained unhappy and brought her complaint to this service.

Our investigator didn't uphold the complaint. She said there was no evidence to suggest that Secure Trust Bank had made an excessive number of credit searches.

Mrs M didn't agree. She sent in a copy of her credit report which showed multiple soft searches by Secure Trust Bank.

Because Mrs M didn't agree I've been asked to review the complaint.

## **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.

I know it will disappoint Mrs M, but I agree with the investigators opinion. I'll explain why.

I've reviewed the information provided by Secure Trust Bank. This shows that they received two applications from Mrs M on 15 May 2024. The applications came via the broker Hippo Solutions.

The applications appear to be genuine as they contain the same email address for Mrs M as the email address she subsequently used to contact Secure Trust Bank.

I can see that two proposals were made and received. One was under Moneyway and the other was under V12. Both finance providers fall under the umbrella of Secure Trust Bank but they offer different finance products. Therefore, I don't think it was unreasonable that each product required a separate application and credit search.

Neither application proceeded because Mrs M didn't meet the lending criteria.

I've reviewed the credit report that Mrs M has sent into this service. I can see that there are multiple soft searches which have been carried out by Secure Trust Bank (V12) on 15 May 2024.

Soft searches are different to hard searches. A hard search is carried out by a lender each time a person applies for credit. The hard search is recorded on the person's credit report and is visible to other lenders and organisations.

A soft search is recorded in a person's credit history but isn't visible to other lenders and organisations. Soft searches are carried out when lenders need to complete identity checks and to confirm that the information contained on an application is correct.

Unlike hard searches, soft searches don't impact on a person's credit score.

Looking at what happened here, it seems likely that the broker (Hippo) submitted quotations to try and get the best deal for Mrs M. Each time a quote is submitted a soft credit search is carried out.

I appreciate that Mrs M has been caused some concern by the soft searches. However, these haven't impacted on her credit score or creditworthiness.

Taking all the available information into account, I'm not persuaded that Secure Trust Bank has made an error here. I won't be asking them to do anything.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that I don't uphold the complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs M to accept or reject my decision before 17 June 2025.

Emma Davy  
**Ombudsman**