

The complaint

Mr B complains about the actions of Salary Finance Loans Limited ("SFL") in relation to a loan account he has with it.

What happened

Mr B took out loan out through his previous employer in April 2022 for £3,971.60. The contractual loan repayments were £140.27 per month and the loan term was 36 months. SFL were the lender.

Mr B says he made regular monthly repayments to the loan, but after he stopped working for his employer, he said he had a traumatic time, and his mental health was severely impacted.

Mr B says he could no longer meet the monthly contractual loan repayments and so got in touch with SFL and requested a partial settlement figure. Mr B complains that it took a long time for SFL to get back to him in relation to his request. He adds that SFL told him that it might consider writing off his debt if he is able to get a letter from his doctor, which he did at his expense, and SFL took the decision not to write off the outstanding debt. He adds that SFL wouldn't reduce the settlement figure when asked, and it didn't provide him with enough time to pay the partial settlement. He also complains that he found it very difficult to contact SFL and that the service he received from SFL wasn't very good.

An Investigator here considered what both parties had said but they didn't think SFL had done anything wrong. They didn't think there had been significant delays in the communication it had with Mr B, and they didn't find that SFL had acted unfairly.

Mr B didn't agree with the Investigator's view and asked for an Ombudsman to consider matters. Because an agreement couldn't be reached, the complaint has been passed to me to decide on the matter.

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.

Mr B has confirmed to me, that his main concern is the service he received from SFL. He hasn't been specific about what he means here, although I have taken this to mean the time it took for it to provide him with responses, the tone and professionalism of the staff he communicated with, its decision not to write off his debt following receipt of a doctor's letter and concerns around how it dealt with the partial settlement figure.

Clearly, things have been difficult for Mr B since he left his employer. I don't wish for this decision to in anyway downplay or disregard the difficult time he's been through. But being independent means I have to take a step back and consider what both parties have said. And having done so, I can't fairly find that SFL has acted unfairly or unreasonably here.

I have looked at the responses provided by SFLL since Mr B's last complaint to this Service. I haven't found any significant delays in its responses, or that the tone and professionalism of the responses was poor. I can see Mr B referred to conversations that he had with SFLL over the phone too – SFLL hasn't been able to find a record of the call Mr B has referred to, and when asked, Mr B wasn't able to provide evidence of the calls he referred to having taken place either. So, for this reason, it is difficult for me to find that the service received on the calls was poor.

When Mr B wrote to SFLL, he referred to a conversation he'd had with a representative, whereby they'd explained that they might consider writing off the debt if it received medical evidence from him. SFLL explained to Mr B that it would review any information it got, but a write off wasn't guaranteed. I can see that SFLL considered the medical evidence provided by the doctor but took the decision not to write off the balance. While I can understand why Mr B would likely be disappointed by this, SFLL did make him aware that the write off wasn't guaranteed and based on what I've seen of the medical evidence, I don't think its decision was unfair or unreasonable. So, I can't find Mr B has been treated unfairly here.

I can see Mr B has been back and forth with SFLL regarding a partial settlement figure. I note some of his concerns are about the length of time it took to come to that decision, something which I can see was considered in Mr B's previous complaint to this service. So I won't comment on that here. But I can see that Mr B was unhappy with the time limit SFLL had provided for him to pay the offer, and that it wouldn't reduce the settlement figure to £500. I'll start by saying that there is no requirement on SFLL to agree a reduced settlement figure. It follows that there was also no requirement for it to reduce that figure further. And it isn't unreasonable that the offer wasn't available indefinitely. I note what Mr B told SFLL about not being able to afford the £700, however I can see that SFLL had offered to come to a repayment arrangement with Mr B too. So, I can't fairly find SFLL acted unreasonably, and it had tried to come to arrangements in order to help Mr B.

Overall, taking into account all of the evidence I have been provided with, while I appreciate my decision will come as a disappointment to Mr B, I can't fairly find that SFLL has done anything wrong.

My final decision

For the reasons set out above, I don't uphold Mr B's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr B to accept or reject my decision before 15 July 2025.

Sophie Wilkinson
Ombudsman