

The complaint

Mr G is unhappy with how Madison CF UK Limited, trading as 118 118 Money ('118 118') reported his credit card to the credit reference agencies (CRAs).

What happened

In early April 2025 Mr G noticed his 118 118 credit card was reporting to one of the CRAs as 'settled'. Mr G knew this to be incorrect as he had not closed the account and so he contacted 118 118, and he raised a complaint.

118 118 explained that due to several months of the credit card not being used they had recognised it as 'dormant' and so the credit facility of £4,000 was still available to Mr G as the account was not closed ('settled'). 118 118 updated the reporting to show the account as 'active' and let Mr G know that even making small purchases using the card would prevent this from happening again. 118 118 also said the reporting would have had no negative impact for Mr G.

Mr G didn't accept what 118 118 said as he claimed there had been a negative impact to his credit score, the fact 118 118 had updated the reporting and another CRA had upheld a dispute he raised supported that 118 118 were in the wrong. Mr G said the matter had caused him a considerable amount of stress and anxiety, and he had spent time having to sort out the matter.

Our Investigator considered Mr G's complaint and concluded 118 118 had acted reasonably in the circumstances. They explained there was nothing to suggest 118 118 had wrongly reported Mr G's account and it was not reasonable to hold 118 118 responsible for how the CRAs then interpreted and presented that information.

Mr G strongly disagreed. He said 118 118 had misrepresented the status of his account, in turn affecting his financial standing. Mr G said 118 118's responsibility extended to ensuring the information they had provided to the CRAs was being reported correctly. Mr G said 118 118 ought to take accountability for the impact of their poor reporting.

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've only included a summary of what's happened above, and while I may not respond to every point each party has raised, I have reviewed all the submissions available and focused on what I consider relevant to reaching a fair and reasonable resolution in this matter.

To reach a fair and reasonable decision I have taken into account any relevant law and regulations, regulator's rules, guidance and standards, codes of practice and (where appropriate) what is considered to have been good industry practice at the relevant time.

It is not my role to fine or punish a firm, or to interfere with a firm's systems, processes or controls – these are all considerations for the appropriate regulator.

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the independent regulatory office in charge of upholding information rights in the public interest and they set out guidance and principles for organisations and lenders reporting to the CRAs.

As part of their responsibilities 118 118 have a responsibility to report information about their customers to the CRAs fairly, accurately and ensure that information is up to date.

The ICO recognises that as a general rule it is likely that it is the data provider that will be the company responsible for the entry on a person's credit file, but the ICO also acknowledges an expectation for CRAs to take reasonable measures to ensure the information that is reported by lenders via their credit files is accurate.

So I think it is fair to say it would be unreasonable to expect 118 118 ought to monitor the ongoing reporting of all their customers' information being reported by the CRAs. I've therefore considered whether 118 118 provided fair, accurate and up to date information to the CRAs for them to report.

Where the evidence is incomplete, inconclusive or contradictory, I have made my decision on the balance of probabilities – which, in other words, means I have based it on what I think is more likely than not to have happened given the available evidence and the wider circumstances.

I think it is fair to say Mr G's account was being reported as 'settled' (or closed) by at least one of the three main CRAs (CRA1) and also by the credit information provider using CRA1's data. And as it is accepted Mr G's account had not been closed, rather it was 'dormant' due to inactivity, the information being reported by CRA1 and the credit information provider was therefore not accurate.

That said I think 118 118 were more likely than not providing the CRAs with information to say that the account was dormant. Their record of credit account information for sharing shows Mr G's account marked as 'D' for dormant from 15 March 2025. And there is no other evidence available to show what the other CRAs were reporting at the time, so in the circumstances it seems more likely than not that 118 118 were accurately reporting the account as 'dormant' to the CRAs and CRA1 was the outlier in their reporting.

I've also considered if 118 118 were fair to report the account as dormant when they did, or if they did anything wrong in this regard, but there is no requirement I am aware of that states how long a period of inactivity on an account can be before the account is considered to be dormant. So it appears a matter for the firm's judgement and therefore not something I can interfere with. 118 118's records of Mr G's balance show that a zero balance was maintained for several months prior to the account being noted as dormant.

It also appears the error was corrected within a reasonable time. The account was dormant from mid-March 2025 and by the end of April 2025 reporting had been corrected to show this. 118 118 responded to the CRA1's dispute, instigated by Mr G, to update the reporting of the account.

On balance, I've therefore not seen enough here to persuade me 118 118 did anything wrong or were inaccurately reporting Mr G's account to the CRAs.

I'm aware of what Mr G has said about the impact this matter has had to his financial standing, and I have no doubt that his financial standing and creditworthiness is important to

him. I've not found that 118 118 have done anything wrong here, but it may help Mr G to know that potential creditors will consider a number of variables when deciding whether to lend to someone, including assessing someone's income and outgoings to determine if the individual can sustainably afford new credit. And credit scores provided by CRAs are not utilised by prospective creditors who typically use their own credit scoring systems. The CRA's credit scores are for individuals' use only.

I realise my findings here will come as a disappointment to Mr G, but overall in the circumstances I'm not persuaded 118 118 have done something wrong, or treated Mr G unfairly in this matter.

My final decision

For the reasons above, my final decision is that I do not uphold Mr G's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr G to accept or reject my decision before 23 December 2025.

Kristina Mathews
Ombudsman