

## **The complaint**

Miss G complains that Santander UK Plc (Santander) was failed to support her when she became reliant on, and struggled to repay, her overdraft facility.

## **What happened**

Miss G has held a personal current account with Santander for several years. In May 2021 Miss G applied for – and Santander granted – a personal current account overdraft facility of £300. The credit limit of the overdraft was increased to £900 in June 2021, and to £2,000 in September 2021.

In 2024, Miss G complained that Santander had failed to support her when she struggled to repay her overdraft facility, and that the interest and charges applied had contributed to her financial difficulties.

In its final response, Santander said it thought it could have done more to support Miss G and therefore offered to refund interest and charges applied to the account from April 2023 – December 2024.

Miss G wasn't happy with Santander's final response, and referred the complaint to our service.

One of our Investigators considered Miss G's complaint, and didn't uphold it. Miss G disagreed with our Investigator's opinion.

As the case couldn't be resolved, it comes to me to decide.

## **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 considered the relevant rules and guidance on responsible lending set by the FCA, laid out in the consumer credit handbook (CONC). In summary, these say that Santander had a duty to review the account regularly to ensure the overdraft continued to be affordable for Miss G. Santander also had a duty to monitor Miss G's usage of the overdraft, attempt contact her if she showed a pattern of repeat use, and to take further steps if she didn't respond and there were signs of financial difficulties.

I've borne this in mind when considering whether Santander has done enough to put things right, or whether it should have taken further steps prior to April 2023.

The transaction history for the account shows that Miss G used the overdraft for brief periods in 2021, but began using the overdraft more frequently during 2022. The statements show a

mix of essential and discretionary spending.

From June 2022, Miss G says she started having her salary paid into a different current account, to help her to manage her finances.

I don't think the transaction history shows any signs that Miss G was experiencing financial stress – such as returned direct debits, or use of short term lending.

Santander sent Miss G letters about her overdraft use periodically from March 2022 onwards. In summary, these letters highlighted that Miss G was paying a significant amount in interest, and invited her to contact Santander to discuss her options.

I think it was reasonable that Santander contacted Miss G about her overdraft usage. It doesn't appear that Miss G responded to Santander's attempts to contact her. And, as I noted above, the statements show a mix of essential and non-essential expenditure. So, I think Miss G could have used some of the funds from her non-essential expenditure to reduce her overdraft facility over time – if she wished.

Accordingly, I don't think Miss G's use of the account warranted Santander taking further action to intervene, prior to April 2023. So, I think it's offer in its final response letter is a fair way to put things right.

I've also considered whether the relationship might have been unfair under s140A of the Consumer Credit Act 1974. However, for the reasons I've already given, I don't Santander lent irresponsibly to Miss G or otherwise treated them unfairly under the scope of this complaint. I haven't seen anything to suggest that Section 140A or anything else would, given the facts of this complaint, lead to a different outcome here.

### **My final decision**

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

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss G to accept or reject my decision before 17 October 2025.

Frances Young  
**Ombudsman**