

The complaint

Mr B complains that Vida Bank Limited declined his application for a Transfer of Equity to remove his ex-partner from the mortgage.

Mr B has said that he has been paying the mortgage on his own for a significant amount of time and believes it's affordable in his sole name.

What happened

Mr B has a mortgage with Vida Bank which is joint with his ex-partner. Mr B had a court order issued in March 2025 which said he should look to remove his ex-partner from any liability on the mortgage.

He approached Vida Bank shortly after to make an application for a transfer of equity – to remove the other party. But Vida Bank declined this based on affordability concerns. Mr B raised a complaint with Vida Bank and explained that he has been paying the mortgage on his own for a few years and believes he can afford it.

Vida Bank didn't uphold the complaint, and they were satisfied they had assessed the application fairly.

Mr B wasn't happy with this, so he brought the complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service where it was looked at by one of our investigators who didn't uphold the complaint. He thought that Vida Bank had given fair consideration to Mr B's transfer of equity application and was satisfied that they didn't do anything wrong.

Mr B disagreed and asked for the complaint to be reviewed by an ombudsman, so it's been passed 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.

Having done so, I agree with the outcome that has been reached by the investigator.

I do appreciate it's been a difficult time for Mr B and I also do not underestimate his strength of feeling on the matter.

Having considered everything very carefully, I do consider that Vida Bank gave Mr B's transfer of equity application reasonable consideration. I am satisfied that they declined his application on legitimate concerns that Mr B would not be able to meet the mortgage repayments on his own. I appreciate that Mr B says he's been paying this on his own for a number of years and believes he can afford to do so, but Vida Bank didn't agree.

They passed the application to their underwriting team who also looked into it and having looked at what they considered, I can't say they have acted unfairly.

It's not for us to tell a lender when to lend or when to approve applications, our role is to ensure that businesses have been fair and reasonable when assessing any applications that are made – and I am persuaded that happened here.

While Mr B believes he can afford the mortgage payments on his own, mortgage lenders are required to carry out certain stress tests to ensure that consumers like Mr B, can still afford the mortgage payments should interest rates rise. Having looked at the assessment that Vida Bank made and the information they had taken into consideration, I do think they gave this fair consideration.

Vida Bank still has a duty to provide affordable and responsible lending to Mr B. And it's only fair that Vida Bank is able to legitimately use their commercial judgement to assess the loan repayments are affordable before they make funds available to consumers or when they change the risk profile of an existing loan – such as removing one of the joint borrowers.

And while Mr B has a court order which states he must endeavour to remove the joint party from the mortgage, Mr B is able to transfer legal and beneficial interest to his sole name, but this would not be an automatic transfer by a lender as it is still subject to a lender's lending criteria.

So, while I sympathise with Mr B's situation, I do not consider that Vida Bank has acted unfairly in declining his transfer of equity application.

Mr B may want to consider obtaining independent financial advice to see if there are any other options for him or any other lenders that may be able to provide Mr B a mortgage in his sole name.

My final decision

For the reasons given above, I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr B to accept or reject my decision before 5 February 2026.

Maria Drury
Ombudsman