

The complaint

The Co-operative Bank Plc, trading as Co-op Bank ('Co-op') provided Mr B with an overdraft of £500 in August 2022, increasing it on three occasions: in February 2023, July 2023 and June 2024.

Mr B says Co-op shouldn't have agreed to the overdraft and increases that followed.

What happened

The details of this complaint are well-known to both parties, so I won't repeat them again here. The facts aren't in dispute, so I'll focus on giving the reasons for my decision.

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.

We've set out our general approach to complaints about unaffordable or irresponsible lending on our website, and I've taken this into account in deciding Mr B's case.

I've decided that Co-op acted fairly because:

- I think the checks it used when agreeing the overdraft and the increases were reasonable and proportionate, given the overdraft limit being granted and what it already knew about Mr B's financial situation. The checks included looking at Mr B's income and his typical monthly expenses. They didn't suggest that Mr B was having financial difficulties or was overindebted.
- I also think the checks Co-op used were enough to monitor and review Mr B's overdraft use. Although Mr B was making more use of his overdraft from around mid-2023, he was able to reduce his balance when he was paid and tended to rely on it for only part of each month. There were no other signs of financial distress.
- That changed from around August 2024, with Mr B constantly using a significant amount of his overdraft and failing to reduce it. So it looked like his financial situation was getting worse. Co-op told Mr B it was stopping his overdraft from June 2025 and offered him support with paying it off. I've seen that Mr B says he didn't receive this postal notification for some reason, but this was provided to him when he enquired. Co-op also gave him some compensation for the inconvenience caused.
- I also see that Co-op wrote to Mr B to make him aware of his overdraft use and offer support on three separate occasions in 2023 and 2024, so I don't think it acted unfairly in any other way.

All this means I don't think Co-op acted unfairly, either when it provided Mr B with the overdraft and increases or in the way it monitored his use of it. And whilst I've noted that

Mr B has mentioned other overdraft cases looked at by us, our approach is to consider each complaint on its own particular merits.

I've also considered whether the relationship might have been unfair under s.140A of the Consumer Credit Act 1974. However, for the reasons I've already given, I don't think Co-op lent irresponsibly to Mr B or otherwise treated him unfairly. I haven't seen anything to suggest that s.140A or anything else would, given the facts of this complaint, lead to a different outcome here.

I know this isn't the outcome Mr B hoped for, and I realise he'll be disappointed. But for the reasons above, I'm not asking Co-op to do anything to put things right.

My final decision

My final decision is that I'm not upholding Mr B's complaint about The Co-operative Bank Plc, trading as Co-op Bank.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr B to accept or reject my decision before 16 January 2026.

Michael Goldberg

Ombudsman