The complaint

Mr L complains that when he applied for a loan for £15,000 from Barclays Bank UK PLC, they only offered him a loan for £1,800.

What happened

Mr L applied for a £15,000 loan with Barclays, but they only offered him a loan for £1,800.

Mr L was unhappy with the offer because he has a significant income and believes that his financial circumstances show that he can afford a £15,000 loan.

Mr L also believes that he's been discriminated against because of his age and retirement status. He complained to Barclays.

Barclays issued a final response on 28 March 2025. It said it had followed its processes correctly. Barclays apologised for the length of time Mr L had been placed on hold when he called and paid completion of £25.00.

Mr L remained unhappy and complained to this service.

Our investigator didn't uphold the complaint. He said he hadn't found any evidence that Barclays had done anything wrong, or that it hadn't handled Mr L's complaint fairly.

Mr L didn't agree so I've been asked to review the complaint.

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 know it will disappoint Mr L but I agree with the investigator's opinion. I'll explain why.

I've read and considered the whole file, but I'll concentrate my comments on those points which are most relevant to my decision. If I don't mention a specific point, it's not because I've failed to take it on board and think about it, but because I don't think I need to comment on it in order to reach what I think is the right outcome.

Mr L has explained that he retired in March 2023 and that he has a significant pension fund of over 1 million pounds from which he draws down money to his current account and then into his savings account as and when he requires it, generally three or four times a year. He says the money coming into his account is no different from his income when he was working and believes that Barclays has discriminated against him because he is retired.

I've looked at the process that Mr L followed when he applied for the loan to see whether Barclays made an error or treated Mr L unfairly.

Mr L completed the eligibility checker online to see how much he could borrow. He inputted his personal and financial information, and the eligibility checker confirmed that his pre-selected limit was £1,800.

Barclays has provided screenshots of the digital journey that Mr L would have completed. The pre-selected limits process confirms *“the amount you can apply for and the rate you’ll be offered is based on your personal circumstances, the loan amount and the term. This is based on what we currently know about you and is accurate for today but could change”.*

Mr L didn’t continue with the application beyond this point. Because he didn’t complete an application and only completed the pre-selected limits process, it isn’t possible to say whether his loan application would’ve been successful or not, and in what amount.

Having reviewed the pre -selection process, I’m satisfied that the information presented was clear and unambiguous. The screenshots I’ve seen make it clear that any loan offer would be subject to a full application and discussion about financial circumstances. It also made it clear that the pre selection process wouldn’t affect a customer’s credit score.

I understand that Mr L was disappointed when the eligibility checker told him that he could only have a loan for £1,800. However, I haven’t found any evidence to suggest that Barclays made an error or treated Mr L unfairly during the pre selection process. The screenshots make it clear that the offer was based on the information inputted on the day, and that the amount Mr L could apply for was accurate for that day but subject to change.

I’ve gone on to look at how Barclays handled Mr L’s complaint. I can see from the contact file notes provided that Barclays assured Mr L that there wasn’t a declined loan on his record or any impact on his credit score. I haven’t found any evidence to suggest that Mr L’s credit score or credit file was negatively impacted.

Barclays explained to Mr L that the information about his pension that he had inputted during the pre selection process didn’t show a regular monthly income because he had entered his pension draw down as a lump sum. Barclays also explained to Mr L that on a full loan application the information about his pension would’ve been manually reviewed by an underwriter.

As I’ve said above, Mr L didn’t proceed to the full application stage, so it’s not possible to say what would’ve happened.

Based on everything I’ve seen, I haven’t seen any evidence that Barclays made an error or treated Mr L unfairly. Nor have I seen anything which leads me to think that Mr L has been discriminated against on the grounds of his retirement status. I would point out, however, that this service can’t make a finding on whether someone has received unequal treatment under The Equality Act. Only a court or tribunal can do that.

Finally, I’ll comment on the service aspects of Mr L’s complaint. I’m aware that Mr L was put on hold for a long time when he contacted Barclays. Barclays has apologised for any inconvenience caused and has paid compensation of £25, which I think is fair and reasonable.

For the reasons I’ve explained, I’m unable to uphold the complaint.

My final decision

My final decision is that I don’t uphold the complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr L to accept or reject my decision before 30 September 2025.

Emma Davy
Ombudsman