

The complaint

Miss G complains that Madison CF UK Limited trading as 118 118 Money ('118') didn't identify or investigate a data breach that impacted her.

Miss G wants 118 to pay her more compensation and for 118 to change their process.

What happened

118 upheld Miss G's complaint that her account data had been shared with her partner and vice versa. 118 accepted they'd delayed identifying the issue. To put things right 118 apologised, took corrective action and wrote off Miss G's credit card balance of £377.41. Miss G's account is now closed.

Miss G referred her complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service, saying 118's compensation didn't reflect the severity of the breach. She said it caused tension with her partner, each thinking the other had taken a financial product out in their name. Miss G said there had been mix ups for years and 118 had not taken her concerns seriously.

Our investigator considered the available evidence and our guidelines for compensation for distress and inconvenience. He thought 118 had offered a fair and reasonable resolution to Miss G's complaint, so didn't recommend they do anything further.

Miss G disagreed and sought an ombudsman's 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.

I've taken into account any relevant law and regulations, the 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.

Having done so, I agree that 118 have already provided a fair and reasonable resolution to Miss G's complaint. I'll explain why.

The Financial Ombudsman Service resolves individual complaints based on what is fair and reasonable in the circumstances of each case. I can't interfere with a firm's processes, systems or controls, nor can I fine or punish a business for getting things wrong. The ICO regulates compliance to data protection laws in the UK and can fine businesses, but they don't issue compensation to individuals.

Miss G suggests £7,000 compensation is fair. I've consulted the Financial Ombudsman's Guidelines for awards for distress and inconvenience, which are summarised on our website. For me to award this level of compensation I'd have to be satisfied 118's actions had an extreme impact on Miss G.

I recognise Miss G's strength of feeling about what happened, but I'm not persuaded the impact was extreme. I am more persuaded that 118's actions caused Miss G distress and inconvenience over many months and had a short-term impact on her relationship. So under our guidelines, it's likely compensation between £300 and £750 is reasonable.

I've considered that Miss G's information wasn't shared with the world at large and I don't think it was used to harm her. Miss G provided her partner's contact details when setting up her agreements with 118 so I think she was reasonably aware that 118 might use these to communicate with her about her agreements, and her partner may see information about her account. The shared email address was linked to the app, which is how the crossover of information came about. None of this means the data breach was Miss G's fault, or that it didn't put a strain on her relationship, but I think it lessens the impact.

Miss G says she was aware of the breach two to three years ago, through her partner. She says she raised the breach multiple times over a prolonged period, not just once in a live chat. I've reviewed 118's account notes which go back to 2021 and although there is contact with Miss G there are no notes of her concerns until the complaint in May 2025. 118 accept there was a live chat where issues were raised, and that they missed an opportunity to fix things. I agree it was disappointing for Miss G to raise her concerns and not have them taken seriously. But I have also considered that Miss G could reasonably have made a formal complaint sooner if this matter was having a severe impact.

I know this won't be the outcome Miss G hoped for, but I think 118 have provided a fair resolution to her complaint in these circumstances so I won't ask them to do more. 118 apologised, took corrective action and applied a credit of £377.41 to Miss G's account. I think that amount is fair in these circumstances, and in line with our approach to compensation.

My final decision

For the reasons I've set out, 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 February 2026.

Clare Burgess-Cade
Ombudsman