

## **The complaint**

This complaint is about a mortgage application that Miss O made to The Cooperative Bank Plc. Miss O says the application was unduly delayed. Co-op has paid compensation of £125 but Miss O doesn't think it's enough. She says she had to change pre-arranged plans when the completion funds weren't released and is seeking £600-700.

## **What I've decided – and why**

The details of this complaint are well known to both parties so I won't repeat them again here. Instead I'll focus on giving the reasons for my decision. Although I've read and considered the whole file I'll keep my comments to what I think is relevant. If I don't comment on any specific point it's not because I've failed to consider it but because I don't think I need to comment on it in order to reach what I think is the right outcome in the wider context.

My remit is to take an overview and decide what's fair "in the round". We have no regulatory function; that's the role of the Financial Conduct Authority; nor are we a consumer protection body. We're an alternative dispute resolution body; an informal alternative to the courts for financial businesses and their customer to resolve their differences.

We're impartial, and we don't take either side's instructions on how we investigate a complaint. We conduct our investigations and reach our conclusions without interference from anyone else. That means I don't have to address every individual question or issue that's been raised if I don't think it changes the outcome.

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've come to the following conclusions.

Mortgage underwriting isn't an exact science; nor is it a mechanical process. Lenders generally have anticipated timescales for how long an application might take, but occasionally things take longer than expected. If I'm to order Co-op to pay Miss O the compensation she's seeking, I have to be satisfied of two things. Firstly:

- that Co-op unduly and excessively delayed the application by way of specific errors or omissions; and
- that the delay was the sole or over-riding cause of identifiable loss, whether financial or non-financial, to Miss O, that warrants a greater award than the £125 Co-op has already paid.

Looking at the overall progression of the application, and the evidence from both sides, I'm not persuaded either is the case.

There was a short holdup in processing the application, largely due to Co-op experiencing unusually high volumes of applications during the early part of 2024. But overall, the offer was issued around five weeks after the application was received, and completion took place within eleven weeks.

There was a mix-up between Co-op and Miss O's solicitors about the release of funds. But nothing points to that being anything more than a minor administrative issue arising from the solicitors requesting the funds only two days before completion rather than the required five.

I've looked hard at the information Miss O sent us about an appointment in Liverpool around the same time as the scheduled completion. It doesn't persuade me she suffered a financial loss as a result of anything Co-op did or failed to do. Overall, I find the £125 Co-op has already paid to be fair. If no payment had been made, I would not be awarding more.

### **My final decision**

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

My final decision concludes this service's consideration of this complaint, which means I'll not be engaging in any further consideration or discussion of the merits of it.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss O to accept or reject my decision before 18 November 2025.

Jeff Parrington

**Ombudsman**