

## **The complaint**

Mr F complains that Barclays Bank UK PLC trading as Barclaycard lent irresponsibly when it approved his credit card application.

## **What happened**

Mr F applied for a Barclaycard credit card in March 2024. In his application, Mr F said he was employed with an annual income of £36,000. Barclaycard has confirmed it used a service provided by the credit reference agencies to verify the level of income Mr F gave and calculated a net monthly figure of £2,246. A credit search was completed that found no adverse credit like Bankruptcy or County Court Judgements. Two defaults recorded in 2018 relating to credit cards in Mr F's name were found. Outstanding credit card debt totalling £5,358 was noted with monthly repayments totalling £160. Loans totalling £9,558 with repayments totalling £359 were also noted.

Barclaycard completed an affordability assessment. In his application, Mr F said he was an "owner occupier" but no mortgage was noted on his credit file so Barclaycard took the view he owned his home outright and no deductions for housing costs were made. Barclaycard used Mr F's monthly income and made deductions for his regular outgoings. After completing the affordability assessment Barclaycard says Mr F had a disposable income of around £939 a month. Barclaycard approved Mr F's application and issued a credit card with a limit of £10,000.

Mr F used his credit card and the limit was reduced over time in stages, reaching £5,450 in April 2025. Mr F's explained that he also contacted Barclaycard to discuss repayments once the promotional interest rate ends but didn't receive a promised callback.

More recently, Mr F complained that Barclaycard lent irresponsibly and it issued a final response. Barclaycard said it had carried out the relevant lending checks before approving Mr F's application and didn't agree it lent irresponsibly. Barclaycard apologised that Mr F hadn't been called back as agreed when he called to discuss his account. Details of how to contact Barclaycard's customer support team as well as organisations that can provide debt advice were also given.

An investigator at this service looked at Mr F's complaint. When discussing his case, Mr F explained that he was a full time student when he applied for the credit card and in receipt of student loans. Mr F advised he'd given his previous income in the application. The investigator thought Barclaycard completed reasonable and proportionate checks before approving Mr F's application and didn't agree it lent irresponsibly. Mr F asked to appeal so his complaint has been passed to me to make a 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.

Before agreeing to lend, the rules say Barclaycard had to complete reasonable and proportionate checks to ensure Mr F could afford to repay the debt in a sustainable way. These affordability checks needed to be focused on the borrower's circumstances. The nature of what's considered reasonable and proportionate will vary depending on various factors like:

- The amount of credit;
- The total sum repayable and the size of regular repayments;
- The duration of the agreement;
- The costs of the credit; and
- The consumer's individual circumstances.

That means there's no set list of checks a lender must complete. But lenders are required to consider the above points when deciding what's reasonable and proportionate. Lenders may choose to verify a borrower's income or obtain a more detailed picture of their circumstances by reviewing bank statements for example. More information about how we consider irresponsible lending complaints can be found on our website.

I've set out the information Barclaycard used when considering Mr F's application above. I understand Mr F's told us the income information provided wasn't right and reflected previous employment. But I think, as a starting point, Barclaycard could expect the information provided to be accurate. I also think it's reasonable to note Barclaycard verified the level of income Mr F declared by using a service provided by the credit reference agencies. Given that returned a positive result, I'm satisfied it was reasonable for Barclaycard to use the income details Mr F provided and a net monthly figure of £2,246. I also note that Mr F selected "owner occupier" for his residential status. But when the credit file showed no mortgage, Barclaycard reasonably took the view Mr F owned his property outright. I understand that may not be the case, but I haven't been persuaded it was an unreasonable position for Barclaycard to take based on the information provided in the application.

The credit search completed found details of Mr F's other unsecured debts. Two defaults from 2018 were recorded but no other adverse credit or recent arrears were found except of a missed payment around seven months earlier. Whilst it appears Mr F had experienced some difficulties with his credit in 2017 and 2018, his credit file indicates he was in a stable financial position at the point of application. As noted above, I can see Barclaycard was aware of Mr F's existing credit and took the monthly repayments into account when completing the application.

Barclays carried out an affordability assessment using Mr F's income and deductions for Council Tax, utilities, general living expenses and existing debts. Ultimately, Barclaycard reached the view Mr F had a disposable income of around £939 after covering his existing outgoings. In my view, that was a reasonable conclusion following proportionate lending checks by Barclaycard. I'm satisfied a disposable income of £939 would've been sufficient to sustainably afford repayments to a new credit card with a limit of £10,000. I'm sorry to disappoint Mr F but I haven't been persuaded Barclaycard lent irresponsibly when it approved his credit card application in March 2024.

Mr F has explained that he contacted Barclaycard to discuss freezing interest on his account but the promised callback wasn't received. Barclaycard's final response from September 2025 apologised for failing to call Mr F back as promised. Barclaycard also provided details of how to contact its financial support teams as well as details of other organisations that may be able to assist. I understand why Mr F is frustrated he wasn't called back as agreed but I'm satisfied that by apologising and providing the relevant contact details Barclays has fairly responded to his complaint.

I've considered whether the business acted unfairly or unreasonably in any other way including whether the relationship might have been unfair under Section 140A of the Consumer Credit Act 1974. However, for the reasons I've already given, I don't think Barclaycard lent irresponsibly to Mr F or otherwise treated him unfairly. I haven't seen anything to suggest that Section 140A or anything else would, given the facts of this complaint, lead to a different outcome here.

### **My final decision**

My decision is that I don't uphold Mr F's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr F to accept or reject my decision before 19 February 2026.

Marco Manente  
**Ombudsman**