

The complaint

Mr G complains Santander UK Plc have recorded his personal details with Cifas – a fraud prevention database - and won't remove them.

What happened

Mr G made a loan application to Santander in July 2024. Santander declined that application and registered a Cifas marker in relation to it.

Mr G complained to Santander. It replied to say to look into the Cifas marker it would require Mr G to attend the branch with identification. Mr G didn't want to do this, so referred his complaint to our service.

An Investigator considered the circumstances. He said, in summary, Santander now accepted that the application had been a genuine one by Mr G and so he recommended the Cifas marker should be removed and Santander should pay Mr G £200 in recognition of the distress and inconvenience by filing it in the first place.

Santander didn't accept the Investigator's findings. It maintained it had registered the marker correctly.

As Santander didn't agree, the complaint's been passed to me to decide.

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.

The marker Santander has registered in Mr G's case is a "false identity fraud" marker. The intended purpose of this marker is to record that an application has been made using a false identity or misusing an innocent person's genuine details.

To record a marker for "false identity fraud", Santander must be able to show a number of requirements have been met, including:

- There must be reasonable grounds to believe that an identified fraud or financial crime has been committed or attempted.
- The evidence must be clear, relevant and rigorous.

Here, Santander say the details in Mr G's loan application matched information that had previously been used to make fraudulent applications at other financial businesses. These details included his name and several other personal details. So, it had concerns that the application wasn't genuine and as a result, it says it was therefore obliged to load the details to Cifas.

Santander has provided evidence of the information it is relying on to support this. I can't share the specific details of that evidence with Mr G, but I do want to assure him I've considered that evidence carefully. The evidence provided does indicate multiple applications being made at different financial businesses using various details Mr G then used as part of his loan application to Santander.

Mr G says the application was genuinely made by him and all the details he provided were correct. And Santander appear to now accept that the application was genuine.

Based on the information Santander had at the time of the application, I understand why it had the concerns it did. But I would then have expected it to have investigated whether the application it was dealing with was in fact fraudulent, instead of basing its decision to register the marker solely on the information available from third parties – which is what Santander seems to have done in the circumstances.

And, in this case, there's no evidence of a false identity being used or that Mr G's genuine details were being used on the application in question by someone who wasn't Mr G – which is what the marker is intended to indicate. As Santander seemingly didn't fully investigate the circumstances of the application to satisfy itself as to its authenticity before applying the marker, I find it hasn't acted fairly in registering the Cifas marker.

Overall, I don't find Santander has sufficient evidence to believe an identified fraud or financial crime has been committed or attempted in these circumstances. So, I'm not satisfied Santander was entitled to register the Cifas marker at the time of Mr G's loan application. So I'm going to require Santander to remove it.

Mr G has told us the Cifas marker is causing him distress and financial hardship. Having considered the impact he's told us this has had on him - including the difficulty the marker caused during his remortgage - I find £200 is fair and reasonable in recognition of the distress and inconvenience caused.

My final decision

For the reasons I've explained, I uphold this complaint.

To put things right, I require Santander UK Plc to:

- Remove the Cifas marker.
- Pay Mr G £200 in recognition of the distress and inconvenience caused.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr G to accept or reject my decision before 10 December 2025.

Eleanor Rippengale
Ombudsman