

The complaint

Miss E complains that PROPEL HOLDINGS (UK) LIMITED trading as Quidmarket (“Quidmarket”) gave her a loan without carrying out sufficient affordability checks.

What happened

Miss E was advanced one instalment loan of £300 in July 2025 and she was due to make 4 monthly payments of £116.38. Miss E has had problems repaying the loan and an outstanding balance remains due.

Quidmarket didn’t uphold Miss E’s complaint and so she referred it to the Financial Ombudsman. It was reviewed by an Investigator, who also didn’t uphold the complaint because in their view proportionate checks had been conducted. Miss E didn’t agree saying in summary.

- At the time she was in receipt of statutory sick pay (SSP) which was lower than her regular salary.
- Miss E also says she had a number of defaults, was using other payday lenders and was gambling which was visible in her bank statements.
- Miss E says Quidmarket hasn’t complied with the regulations to check her finances before lending to her – it needed to check her information.
- This loan increased her financial hardship.

The Investigator explained why these comments didn’t change their mind and as no agreement could be reached the complaint has been passed to me for 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.

We’ve set out our general approach to complaints about short-term lending - including all the relevant rules, guidance and good industry practice - on our website.

Quidmarket, under CONC 5.2A had to assess the lending to check if Miss E could afford to pay back the amount she’d borrowed without undue difficulty. It needed to do this in a way which was proportionate to the circumstances. Quidmarket’s checks could have taken into account a number of different things, such as how much was being lent, the size of the repayments, and Miss E’s income and expenditure.

With this in mind, I think in the early stages of a lending relationship, less thorough checks might have been proportionate. But certain factors might suggest Quidmarket should have done more to establish that any lending was sustainable for Miss E. These factors include:

- Miss E having a low income (reflecting that it could be more difficult to make any loan repayments to a given loan amount from a lower level of income);
- The amounts to be repaid being especially high (reflecting that it could be more

- difficult to meet a higher repayment from a particular level of income);
- Miss E having a large number of loans and/or having these loans over a long period of time (reflecting the risk that repeated refinancing may signal that the borrowing had become, or was becoming, unsustainable);
 - Miss E coming back for loans shortly after previous borrowing had been repaid (also suggestive of the borrowing becoming unsustainable).

There may even come a point where the lending history and pattern of lending itself clearly demonstrates that the lending was unsustainable for Miss E. As only one loan was approved this doesn't apply to Miss E's complaint.

Quidmarket was required to establish whether Miss E could sustainably repay the loan – not just whether she technically had enough money to make her repayments. Having enough money to make the repayments could of course be an indicator that Miss E was able to repay her loan sustainably. But it doesn't automatically follow that this is the case.

Miss E told Quidmarket that she received an income of £1,990 per month. Quidmarket didn't just rely on what Miss E said – it says that it would've checked either the income electronically – most likely through one of the tools made available by the credit reference agencies or it would've collected payslips.

No payslips were collected so I'm satisfied that an electronic check was carried out and Quidmarket didn't make any adjustments to the income – indicating the amount declared by Miss E was likely accurate.

Miss E says at the time she was in receipt of SSP – and wasn't receiving her full salary. However, that information wasn't disclosed to Quidmarket and as this was the first loan, it was entirely reasonable and proportionate for it to have relied on what it was told by Miss E especially as it cross checked her income. As such, Quidmarket didn't know Miss E was in receipt of SSP.

In terms of outgoings, Miss E said was a tenant and her total monthly outgoings came to £525. Quidmarket then went about checking the information Miss E had provided along with conducting a credit search – which I'll come on to below. Having carried out checks into the information Miss E had provided it uplifted her monthly costs to £1,489. This left disposable income of £500 – which was more than enough to cover the payments Miss E committed to making.

As part of the application Quidmarket carried out a credit search and it has provided the results. I want to add that there was no requirement for a credit search to be carried out, let alone to a specific standard.

The credit check results didn't show any defaults, types of insolvency or County Court Judgment. The active accounts had been serviced and paid generally as expected and there wasn't enough recent adverse data to suggest Miss E was either struggling to make her repayments or was in a vulnerable position.

Having looked at all the information Miss E provided and the results of Quidmarket's own checks I've seen no reason why it would've been concern enough for it to have either declined the application or to have requested further information.

Miss E says that had Quidmarket asked to see her bank statements it would've seen she was gambling and not lent to her. But given what Quidmarket knew about Miss E, I'm satisfied the checks were proportionate. As such, I don't think Quidmarket needed to do

more than it did such as gathering bank statements and it therefore didn't and couldn't have known about Miss E's gambling.

An outstanding balance remains due, and I would encourage Miss E to discuss her situation with Quidmarket to find a mutually agreeable way forward. I can see she has approached a debt advice charity so it's possible that this debt has been incorporated into a plan or a way forward has already been agreed. But I would also remind Quidmarket of its responsibility to treat Miss E fairly and with forbearance when discussing a way to repay what is due.

I've also considered whether Quidmarket 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 Quidmarket lent irresponsibly to Miss E or otherwise treated her unfairly in relation to this matter. I haven't seen anything to suggest that Section 140A would, given the facts of this complaint, lead to a different outcome here.

My final decision

For the reasons I've outlined above, I am not upholding Miss E's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss E to accept or reject my decision before 16 March 2026.

Robert Walker
Ombudsman