

The complaint

Miss R has complained about what happened when she applied for further borrowing on a buy to let (“BTL”) mortgage she holds with Barclays Bank UK PLC. The valuation that was carried out came in lower than Miss R thought and she’s unhappy with that, and also with what happened after when she wanted to appeal the valuation figure.

What happened

Miss R has a BTL mortgage with Barclays.

In 2025 she applied to borrow some further funds and extend the mortgage term, and as part of that application Barclays instructed a mortgage valuation be carried out. Miss R had said she thought the property was worth £190,000, but the surveyor said it was only worth £170,000. Their comments on the valuation report said *“The purchase price/estimated value is considered to be high and is not supported by comparable sales evidence in the area.”*

Miss R raised a complaint with Barclays. She said that the property had been valued at £17,000 less than its market value, and to ensure fairness and accuracy she arranged for an independent valuation through an online estate agent. She said their ‘surveyor’ provided a valuation that aligned with market expectations and her understanding of the property’s worth and was based on over 62 comparable properties in the area. She said, in contrast, Barclays’ surveyor had said there was nothing to compare the property with.

Barclays responded to the complaint on 12 August 2025. It said there was a lack of comparable properties in the area, and its policy states it can only appeal a valuation if its more than 25% lower than the figure noted in the application. It said Miss R didn’t meet that threshold and despite referring the case to another team, the decision remained that Barclays needed to rely on the assessment of the surveyor. It said whilst it could still lend to her, the amount would be reduced due to the down valuation of the property.

Our Investigator didn’t uphold the complaint. He said Barclays was entitled to trust the judgement of the surveyor, who was an independent, qualified professional, and it had followed its procedure correctly.

Miss R didn’t agree and so the case has 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.

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 not considered it but because I don't think I need to comment on it in order to reach the right outcome.

Barclays doesn't have the expertise to value property, so it employs the services of a surveyor. When doing so, it's obliged to instruct a suitably qualified surveyor – a requirement that was fulfilled in this case by appointing a member of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors ("RICS"). Barclays is not accountable for any act (or omission) by the surveyor or the firm they work for. That means I can't consider a complaint about the contents of the valuation report (that is, whether it is accurate or not). All I can consider against Barclays is if it discharged its duty in instructing a suitable firm of surveyors and having considered everything I'm satisfied it did.

The surveyor, as an independent, qualified professional, decided the property was worth £170,000. I can't hold Barclays liable for the figure the surveyor reached as it had no input in that. If the surveyor felt the property was worth more then they would have given that as their valuation figure.

A valuation for lending purposes is just for the lender's benefit. A lender is entitled to decide what – if any – valuations can be appealed, and the criteria for those appeals.

I understand why Miss R is confused because an estate agent had suggested a recommended asking price of £190,000 and said they estimated the property was worth £180,000 to £190,000. But lenders generally don't accept estate agent valuations as evidence of a property's value to appeal against a valuation figure given by a RICS professional as these often come in higher than the true value of the property. It doesn't appear the person from the online estate agent is a RICS professional surveyor

Miss R has also said Barclays said there was nothing to compare the property with, whereas the online estate agent had said their figure was based on over 62 comparable properties in the area. The screenshot Miss R has provided indicates the online estate agent told her there were 49 similar properties for sale, and 62 buyers looking for properties like hers in her area. But properties being on the market isn't what is needed for comparable evidence in a mortgage valuation appeal. That's because there is no way of knowing what they'll eventually actually sell for, or if they'll sell at all. They could be under – or over – priced. The thing that matters is the price properties sold for, not what an estate agent would market it at (or tells a potential customer it's worth).

By comparable properties a lender and surveyor mean local properties that have actually sold over a set timeframe, often the last six months, within a set maximum distance. Whilst two properties are said to have been sold in 2025 in the information the online estate agent sent to Miss R, I've not been able to find a record with the Land Registry to match those roads, sale amounts and dates. And, looking at publicly available information, it seems that one property like Miss R's (in that it is also a one bedroom flat) was sold in her road in 2025, and that sold for £169,500.

Barclays instructed a suitably qualified surveyor, and it was entitled to rely on the professional expertise and judgement of the surveyor. I understand how disappointing this was for Miss R but Barclays didn't need to do anything more.

My final decision

I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss R to accept or reject my decision before 13 April 2026.

Julia Meadows
Ombudsman