

The complaint

Miss O is complaining about administration issues she experienced when attempting to make payments to Harvey and Thompson Limited (H&T).

What happened

In March 2025, Miss O entered into a pawnbroking agreement with H&T. H&T lent her £240 and the agreement required that she pay this back (with interest) by the end of September 2025 to redeem the items she pawned.

In April 2025, Miss O tried to make a payment towards the agreement online. She was unable to do so, and complained to H&T. In their final response to Miss O's complaint, H&T said they could see the issue had been resolved on the same day as they'd spoken to Miss O and taken payment over the telephone.

Miss O remained unhappy and brought her complaint to our service. When she did so, she told us she has a disability which affects her memory. She prefers to make payments online because she can do that when she remembers, rather than having to wait until opening hours. She said she's accruing additional interest because of not being able to make payments online. And she said she'd have had her item back much earlier if she'd been able to make the payments she'd wanted to online. She added that she's tried several different payment cards but has never been able to make payments to H&T online.

H&T noted that Miss O had raised a similar complaint before. But our investigator said this was a new complaint about a different credit agreement and therefore we'd look into it.

Our investigator corresponded extensively with Miss O and H&T about her thoughts on the complaint. During this correspondence, Miss O said she'd also had difficulties making a payment over the phone in July 2025. H&T reviewed this latest complaint point and offered £50 to settle the whole matter. Miss O didn't accept this, and H&T increased their offer to £75 – which our investigator said was reasonable. Miss O didn't think this was fair compensation taking into account the inconvenience, lost interest, and stress she'd suffered from not being able to make payments online. She commented that nothing had changed or improved despite all her phone calls with H&T. She asked for the complaint to be referred to an ombudsman – and it's come to me.

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.

Having done so, I'm upholding the complaint. I'm satisfied H&T's offer to pay £75 is fair and reasonable. I appreciate this will be disappointing for Miss O, but I'll explain my reasons below.

I can understand Miss O's frustration. She wanted to make payments weekly over the portal and found that this wasn't possible for her. It's not completely clear to me why the attempted payments failed. H&T said it's an error on Miss O's side, whilst Miss O is convinced the error is H&T's fault. On balance, I think it's more likely that the error is on H&T's side. That's

because they've told us that when they tried to talk Miss O through making a payment on the portal in May 2024, it still failed. And Miss O has provided evidence showing a payment being taken from her bank account by H&T but immediately returned to her.

However, H&T's phone lines are open seven days a week. When Miss O called H&T to complain, they successfully took a payment from her, and they made it clear that she could call to pay in future. So, whilst it wasn't quite as convenient as paying online for Miss O, I'm satisfied there was a reasonable alternative available to her.

H&T have sent us a history of Miss O's attempted payments. This shows that she tried three times on 29 April 2025, outside of H&T's opening hours, and made a successful payment by phone the next day.

Miss O didn't try to make any further payments until 30 June 2025 when she made a successful payment over the phone. I accept it's possible she'd have made more payments sooner if the online payment portal had worked for her at the end of April. And I acknowledge that she's told us she has a disability that makes remembering things difficult and meant it was much more convenient for her to pay online. But she didn't try again, so I can't say the problems she experienced continued to cause her frustration or losses. And, after 30 April 2025, she was aware that she could pay over the phone. So, I can't hold H&T responsible for Miss O not making payments sooner.

Miss O then settled the agreement at the end of July 2025. I can understand her frustration with what happened when she tried to do this. A process that should have been relatively simple took lengthy phone calls involving several people over two days. H&T have acknowledged their service over these calls wasn't good enough. And I think it's fair they compensate Miss O for this.

Putting things right

Miss O says £75 isn't enough to compensate her for the inconvenience, stress, and lost interest the problems have caused. I appreciate she feels strongly about the matter, but I'm satisfied £75 is a fair amount.

To reach this conclusion, I've thought about the amount of the loan, the potential lost interest, and the length of time for which the matter impacted Miss O. In total, Miss O borrowed £240. The interest payable was around 83p per day. There were only two occasions when Miss O tried to make a meaningful payment and couldn't, and both times she made the payment the very next day. So she lost no more than two days' interest. On that basis, whilst I appreciate it was frustrating, I'm not satisfied Miss O suffered significant inconvenience or financial loss because of the failed payments.

Turning to the poor service provided over the phone, it's clear how frustrating this was for Miss O. And this frustration was reasonably foreseeable given the difficulties she'd already had in attempting to pay H&T. But this wasn't a long-running problem – it was all resolved within 48 hours. A payment of £75 therefore seems fair and reasonable, and also proportionate considering the size of the loan.

My final decision

As I've set out above, I'm upholding Miss O's complaint. Harvey and Thompson Limited need to pay Miss O £75 to settle the matter.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss O to accept or reject my decision before 31 December 2025.

Clare King
Ombudsman