

The complaint

Mr S complains about the level of service he received from Zopa Bank Limited in relation to a credit card application.

What happened

In March 2025, Mr S submitted a credit card application online. Before it could process the application, Zopa said it needed some documents from Mr S to verify his details. It sent him a link to its online portal so he could upload the documents. Mr S called Zopa as he was unsure what he needed to do to progress the application. Zopa's agents told Mr S that it needed proof of his identity and income to progress the application. Mr S said he'd already sent copies of his passport and driving licence in the post. He said he wasn't confident using a computer, but he had someone to support him with the application. Zopa said it operates as a digital bank and could only accept documents through its online platform. It had no record of receiving the documents Mr S sent.

In April 2025 Mr S made a complaint. He said he'd sent the required information in the post multiple times – and that one of these attempts had been a tracked first class delivery – so Zopa must have received them. He was concerned about the way Zopa handled the application and said no other lenders had ever asked him for proof of income. He felt Zopa was unreasonably blocking his application. Zopa said it wouldn't be able to proceed with the application until Mr S provided the required information – but it recognised that it ought to have been clearer over the phone about what information he needed to submit. It also acknowledged that Mr S had asked for an email address that he could send documents to, but this wasn't responded to. It offered £50 to recognise any confusion caused. The application was automatically cancelled around the same time, as the required documents hadn't been received.

The complaint was referred to this service. One of our Investigators considered the complaint and thought Zopa's offer was fair in the circumstances. They were satisfied Zopa had followed its process correctly when it asked Mr S to upload documents online – and didn't think it had made an error by cancelling the application when the required evidence wasn't received. Mr S didn't accept the Investigator's conclusions and asked for compensation of at least £100. Because the matter couldn't be resolved, the complaint 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.

I can understand why Mr S feels let down by Zopa here. From his perspective, he provided all of the documentation that Zopa needed to process his application – so I appreciate why he feels the application shouldn't have been cancelled. I've considered whether Zopa made an error when dealing with Mr S' application, or whether it otherwise treated him unfairly.

Zopa – like all lenders – is required to put in place measures to ensure any lending it offers

is responsible and affordable. It's also for Zopa to set its own lending criteria. The way Zopa sets its criteria and assesses applications isn't something I can interfere with – and it isn't within the remit of this service to tell a bank to accept a lending application. As part of its process, Zopa asks for proof of identity and income. This is in place to protect customers from fraud and to ensure lending will be affordable for customers. While I appreciate Mr S was unhappy to be asked for proof of his income, I don't think Zopa made a mistake in asking for it.

Zopa operates as a digital bank, and – as part of its security process – it can only accept proof of identity and income through its online platform, which it uses to verify documents. Again, this process isn't something I can interfere with or require Zopa to change. Mr S says he sent the documents to Zopa by post – but Zopa had already told Mr S it couldn't accept documents in this format. Even if that weren't the case, I haven't seen any evidence to persuade me that Zopa received any letters from Mr S until May 2025 – after the application had already been cancelled. I understand Mr S says he sent letters by recorded delivery before then – but neither he nor Zopa has provided evidence of this. So, even if Zopa did accept correspondence by post, I'm not persuaded the application would have been successful.

I've considered whether Zopa treated Mr S fairly during the application process. When Mr S called Zopa, he explained that he wasn't comfortable using computers and would prefer to correspond by post. He also said he was being supported with the application, so should be able to upload the documents as required. The agents explained to Mr S how he could access its online platform and upload the necessary documents, and Mr S confirmed several times that he would ask for help with this. Overall, I'm satisfied Zopa's agents took reasonable steps to support Mr S with his application and clearly explained the next steps.

The application was eventually cancelled as the necessary documents hadn't been received. I don't find this unreasonable – and I wouldn't expect Zopa to keep an application open indefinitely. I understand that Zopa did eventually receive some details of Mr S' income – but this was several weeks after the application had been cancelled and wasn't in the format that it required. Given the length of time elapsed since the original application, Mr S will need to start a new application if he still wishes to open an account.

It's not disputed that Zopa could have provided Mr S with a better service over the phone. He was given some conflicting information about what documents he needed to provide. Zopa also acknowledged Mr S' request for an email address to send documents to, but didn't respond to the request. Mr S has asked for compensation of at least £100. I've considered the impact of Zopa's errors. Having done so, I'm satisfied Zopa's offer of £50 is fair in the circumstances. It's clear the level of service provided to Mr S caused some avoidable confusion and frustration – but I haven't seen anything to suggest there was a significant impact beyond that. I also think it's likely that the outcome of the application would've been the same regardless of any poor service provided by Zopa's agents – as Mr S didn't upload the necessary documentation at any point.

I appreciate this will come as a disappointment to Mr S, but for the reasons I've explained I'm satisfied that Zopa's offer of £50 is fair in the circumstances. So, I don't require it to do anything further.

My final decision

Zopa Bank Limited has already made an offer to pay £50 to settle the complaint and I think this offer is fair in all the circumstances. So, my decision is that Zopa Bank Limited should pay Mr S £50.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr S to accept or reject my decision before 6 February 2026.

Stephen Billings
Ombudsman