

The complaint

Mr M complains that Lantern Debt Recovery Services Limited trading as Lantern (Lantern) haven't done enough to remedy the fact his data was accessed in an IT security incident they experience.

What happened

Lantern experienced an IT security incident in April 2025. The incident saw a number of Lantern's customer's personal data accessed by a third party. Mr M was one of the affected customers.

When Lantern identified the incident they contacted the relevant bodies, such as the police and the Information Commissioner's office (ICO) and the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and began an internal investigation.

The intention of the investigation was initially to place a fix to stop the access to their system followed by an in-depth look at what data was accessed and how many of their customers were affected. In November 2025 when their investigation was completed and Lantern had all the information they needed; they contacted the affected customers – including Mr M.

Lantern explained what had happened - that some of Mr M's personal data may have been impacted, and what this meant. They went on to say how they had reacted to the incident and told Mr M they had arranged a complimentary twelve month subscription to a fraud monitoring and protection service so that he would be able to monitor his credit report with options for alerts when changes happen and access to other benefits that could assist him if his information was used to try to obtain credit.

Mr M was unhappy with this remedy and so complained to Lantern, he felt compensation was due because of the worry that he had been caused by the incident. He didn't believe the remedy Lantern had put in place would be helpful as he already has access to his credit report through his bank account. Lantern didn't uphold his complaint but gave him a more in-depth explanation about the incident and about the benefits of the subscription service they were offering to him and how it could help him.

Mr M remained unhappy and so brought his complaint to this service. Our investigator thought the remedy Lantern had offered was fair and so didn't uphold Mr M's complaint. Mr M disagreed and so the matter 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 realise that I've summarised this complaint in less detail than the parties and I've done so using my own words. I've concentrated on what I consider to be the key issues. The rules that govern this service allow me to do so. This isn't intended as a discourtesy to either party, but merely to reflect my informal role in deciding what a fair and reasonable outcome

is. This also means I don't think it's necessary to get an answer, or provide my own answer, to every question raised unless it's relevant to the crux of the complaint.

There is no dispute here about what has happened and so my role here is decide if the offer made by Lantern to provide the free monitoring service for twelve months is fair or if they need to do more.

In deciding this I'm assessing if Lantern have done all they can to put Mr M back in the position he would have been in but for the incident. I can't make an award for something that could happen in the future because at this stage that would be hypothetical and I can only consider what has actually happened.

Mr M has told us that he has been very worried about the incident, and the possible implications of it, since he found out about it. He has also told us:

- he has experienced some issues with his phone including receiving unwanted calls and having difficulty with calls connecting
- his address was incorrectly changed on his debt management plan (DMP)

He is unsure if these issues are linked to the incident, but they have given him cause for concern.

Quite naturally all of this has caused him some concern, and given the timing of them I understand why he might question if the incidents are related. So, I've thought about what he has told us here carefully.

Mr M says the issues he has experienced with his phone led him to believe that maybe his sim had been cloned and while I can understand this would be worrying, I haven't seen anything that would suggest his sim has been cloned or that if it had it was related to the Lantern incident.

He has also told us that his DMP company told him the address issue was likely a system error. Given this I can't fairly say this was linked to the Lantern incident either.

Having said that, given that the issues mentioned above all happened shortly after Mr M was aware of the incident I can see why he may think they were connected.

Turning to Lantern's actions following the incident, they shared with us and Mr M that the issue was contained quickly once they were aware of it. They confirmed they had identified the incident as a ransomware attack aimed at disrupting their business rather than targeting individual's data. They also confirmed there was no evidence that Mr M's data or that of any of their customer's had been misused, sold, posted online or leaked. I think this supports what Lantern were saying about them being the target rather than the information itself being taken to be used in an unlawful way, and although I accept it can't be ruled out completely, I'm satisfied Lantern have done everything they can to give Mr M some reassurance here.

Mr M has said that he already has access to his credit report through his bank account and so couldn't see how a twelve-month subscription to his credit file would help him. I feel it would be beneficial here to explain the subscription Lantern have arranged is for a credit monitoring service, not just access to his credit file and there are some important differences. The subscription has a feature that scans online sources looking for the data and if Mr M chooses to register for the service he would be alerted if his data was found online; and if that happened a specialist team would support him and advise him of the most effective ways to stay protected. This would mean he would likely be aware of any attempts

to use his data long before he ordinarily would.

The monitoring service Lantern have provided to help Mr M protect himself in the future is very comprehensive and given this, I'm persuaded it goes as close as possible to putting Mr M back in the position he would have been in but for the incident.

Monetary awards aren't always the most appropriate solution and in this case I'm satisfied the remedy Lantern have put in place will do more to protect Mr M from harm and worry than a monetary award could. That's not to say, Mr M wasn't right to be concerned by the incident, it just means I think the remedy Lantern has put in place goes as close as possible to putting him back in the position he would have been in but for the incident. It follows I won't be asking them to do anything more here to put things right for Mr M

My final decision

For the reasons set out above my final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr M to accept or reject my decision before 13 March 2026.

Amber Mortimer
Ombudsman