

The complaint

Mr B complains about the way Bamboo Limited is reporting his loan account to credit reference agencies (CRAs).

What happened

Bamboo provided Mr B with a personal loan in October 2025. The loan was for £8,000 and it was due to be repaid through 59 monthly instalments of £260.35, followed by a final monthly instalment of £260.50. The total amount to be repaid by the end of the loan term, including interest and fees, is £15,621.15.

Shortly after taking out the loan, Mr B obtained an early settlement figure from Bamboo. This showed the amount needed to settle the loan at that time was £8,059. However Mr B noted that the figure Bamboo is reporting to CRAs is in excess of £15,000.

In or around November 2025, Mr B complained to Bamboo about this matter. His reasons for doing so are familiar to both sides, so I won't repeat them in detail here. But, in summary, Mr B said that the reported balance does not reflect his true financial liability and by recording it in this way lenders will interpret this 'inflated balance' as debt he is liable to pay and this prejudices his access to credit at fair rates.

In December 2025, Bamboo issued its final response. In short, it said that its mode of reporting the loan account to CRAs (i.e. total amount repayable) is in-line with guidance from the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and, therefore, it did not uphold the complaint. Unhappy with this, Mr B referred his complaint to this service.

In January 2026, one of our investigators reviewed the complaint and issued their opinion. In short, the investigator said that ICO guidelines allow lenders to report the amount owed at a given point in time and the early settlement figure Mr B obtained is not the current balance that should be reported. Therefore, the investigator did not uphold the complaint.

Mr B didn't agree. In doing so he reiterated his view that the outstanding balance, if settled today, is not what is being reported to CRAs.

As an agreement couldn't be reached, the complaint has been passed to me to review afresh.

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've reached the same conclusion as the investigator. This being that I do not think this complaint should be upheld. I will explain why I think this is fair outcome in the circumstances.

As I've set out, the loan agreement for Mr B's loan shows that he borrowed £8,000 along with interest totalling £7,621.15 to be repaid over a 60-month term – so that Mr B would repay a total of £15,621.15 over the full term of the loan. And it is this combined figure of £15,621.15 (reducing through monthly instalments) that Bamboo are reporting to the CRAs as being the outstanding balance for the loan.

I recognise Mr B feels that this balance does not reflect his true financial liability, noting that he obtained an early settlement figure £8,059 shortly after taking out the loan. But Bamboo's method for reporting to CRAs doesn't seem unreasonable to me. When Mr B took the loan, he received £8,000 from Bamboo but owed them £15,621.15 as a result. So, if the loan runs to its full term (as set out in the loan agreement), this is the amount that Mr B must repay. So it makes sense to me that Bamboo would report that amount to the CRAs, because it provides a clear and accurate description of Mr B's outstanding debt to Bamboo.

Furthermore, I've had regard for what the ICO says about how lenders should report to a credit file. Specifically, the ICO's 'Principles for Reporting of Arrears, Arrangements and Defaults at Credit Reference Agencies', which, under the section 'Current Balance', states as follows:

"This information relates to the amount owed at a given point in time. It may be made up of a combination of the amount borrowed, interest and charges depending on the terms of the product."

With that being the case, in reporting the outstanding loan balance in this way, Bamboo are in accordance with relevant industry guidance issued by the ICO. And as I have nothing to show the loan information reported is inaccurate, I do not find I can say that Bamboo is acting unfairly here.

I've also reviewed the loan agreement, and while I feel it would have been preferable if this point had been clearly stated or explained, I note that the agreement includes the following:

"Interest will be calculated on the amount of credit on the date [of the loan agreement], and for the duration of this agreement taking into account the repayments that will be made."

This statement describes the process of front-loading loan interest, which is what Bamboo have done and why they are reporting the outstanding balance as consisting of both capital and interest, about which Mr B complains. Notably, there is nothing in the loan agreement that explains that Bamboo wouldn't do this or would only report the capital balance. As such, I feel it was for Mr B to have confirmed this point with Bamboo before he took the loan, if it was a potential point of concern.

Finally, it also must be noted that Bamboo's approach to reporting capital and interest as the outstanding balance isn't unusual. It's an approach taken by many loan providers – although I accept this may not be Mr B's experience. To reiterate, given that loan providers such as Bamboo have an obligation to make accurate reports the CRAs and given that Mr B does owe Bamboo the combined capital and interest amount as per the loan agreement, I don't feel that Bamboo have acted unfairly here as Mr B contends.

With all of that being the case, I do not find that Bamboo has done anything wrong or treated Mr B unfairly by reporting the principle balance together with the associated interest to the CRAs

My final decision

My final decision is that I do not uphold Mr B's complaint about Bamboo Limited.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr B to accept or reject my decision before 9 April 2026.

Ross Phillips
Ombudsman