

The complaint

Mr B complains that Barclays Bank UK PLC ("Barclays") irresponsibly provided him with four personal loans from July 2024 onwards which he couldn't afford.

What happened

The details of this complaint are well-known to both parties, so I won't repeat them again here. The facts aren't in dispute, so I'll focus on giving the reasons for my decision.

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 come to the same conclusion as to that of our investigator and for broadly the same reasons.

I'm aware that I've summarised this complaint above in less detail than it may merit. No discourtesy is intended by this. Instead, I've focussed on what I think are the key issues here. Our rules allow me to do this. This simply reflects the informal nature of our service as a free alternative to the courts.

If there's something I've not mentioned, it isn't because I've ignored it. I haven't. I'm satisfied I don't need to comment on every individual argument to be able to reach what I think is the right outcome. I will, however, refer to those crucial aspects which impact my decision.

Lastly, I would add that where the information I've got is incomplete, unclear or contradictory, I've to base my decision on the balance of probabilities.

We've set out our general approach to complaints about unaffordable or irresponsible lending on our website and I've taken this into account in deciding Mr B's case.

I've decided the credit was provided fairly because:

- I think the checks Barclays did before providing the credit were reasonable and proportionate given the credit limit it offered and what it knew about Mr B's financial situation.
- Barclays didn't just simply accept what Mr B said. It carried out credit searches which showed that Mr B had no recent adverse information on his credit file. I don't think that it was unreasonable to rely on Mr B's declarations after it confirmed his income and expenditure which suggested that the repayments were affordable. I say this as from the information Barclays gathered and the evidence I've seen, Mr B was left with a sufficient disposable income each month with which to afford the new monthly

loan repayments for each application. So I think the repayments for each loan, in the absence of any concerning evidence, appeared affordable.

- Based on the information Barclays gathered and what it knew about Mr B's circumstances, there was nothing to suggest that Mr B was likely to be unable to sustainably repay the credit he was afforded in a reasonable period of time. As part of each application, Mr B was asked if he was aware of any change in future income or expenditure that justified referring the applications for a full manual underwritten assessment. As Mr B didn't indicate there was, the loan applications were approved based on what Barclays already knew about Mr B and how he managed his account.
- I haven't seen any evidence that would suggest to me that Mr B was suffering financial difficulty at the time of each application. I say this as he had no recent adverse information which suggested he was managing his other credit commitments well and had a healthy savings account balance. The credit report that Mr B provided to us at the time gave a credit score of 885 and from my understanding this indicated a consumer with a strong credit history, including consistent on-time payments and a stable financial profile which placed Mr B in a low-risk category for Barclays.
- Barclays would have seen how Mr B had maintained his loan repayments since providing the first loan in July 2024 and which indicated he was managing his finances well.
- I accept that Mr B appears to be suggesting that his actual circumstances may not have been fully reflected either in the information he provided, or the information Barclays obtained.
- However, I've not seen any evidence that Mr B made Barclays aware of these circumstances until he made his complaint to it and nor would it have been evident from the information it obtained. At the time of the applications Mr B declared he was working full time with no dependants. From reviewing the bank statements provided, I can see Mr B's net income did fluctuate but I've also seen regular monthly payments from family members. And although I've noted that Mr B was using funds from his savings account to transfer into his current account, I've seen evidence of large payments moving the other way and with a savings account balance that at times was in excess of £17,000.
- But it's only fair and reasonable for me to uphold a complaint in circumstances where a lender did something wrong. Given the amount of the monthly repayments, the disposable income that appeared to be left each month and the lack of other obvious indicators of an inability to make the monthly repayments in the information Barclays did obtain, I don't think that reasonable and proportionate checks would have extended into requesting the information that would have shown Mr B's personal circumstances at the time. I say this as Barclays were already aware of how Mr B had maintained both the loan repayments and his current account given he banked with it.
- At best, even if I were to accept that further checks were necessary, which I'm not necessarily persuaded is the case here, any such checks would only have gone as far as finding out more about Mr B's regular living costs. And I don't think that conducting a full financial review – which was really the only way that it might have been able to find out the full extent about Mr B's circumstances - was the only way that Barclays could have done this. And given the fact that Mr B had wanted and

applied for these loans, I'm not sure he would have disclosed his full financial situation in the knowledge that if he had, the loan may not have been approved.

- Mr B has disclosed some sensitive medical information to us which I'm grateful for and I acknowledge that the conditions he's disclosed would be challenging for him. However, I've not seen any evidence that Mr B disclosed this to Barclays until he made his complaint.
- I don't think Barclays acted unfairly in any other way.

This means I don't think Barclays did anything wrong when it provided the loans to Mr B.

I've also considered whether the relationship might have been unfair under s.140A of the Consumer Credit Act 1974. However, for the reasons I've already given, I don't think Barclays lent irresponsibly to Mr B or otherwise treated him unfairly. I haven't seen anything to suggest that s.140A or anything else would, given the facts of this complaint, lead to a different outcome here.

I know this isn't the outcome Mr B hoped for. But for the reasons given above, I'm not asking Barclays to do anything to put things right.

Although I'm not upholding this complaint, I'd like to remind Barclays of its ongoing responsibility to treat Mr B with forbearance and due consideration moving forward.

My final decision

My final decision is that I'm not upholding Mr B's complaint about Barclays Bank UK PLC.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr B to accept or reject my decision before 29 April 2026.

Paul Hamber
Ombudsman