

The complaint

Around September 2024 National Westminster Bank Plc (NatWest) provided Miss E with a credit card. It had a credit limit of £7,250. Miss E says the credit was provided irresponsibly.

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.

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 Miss E's complaint.

I've decided the credit was provided fairly because:

- I think the checks NatWest did before providing the credit were reasonable and proportionate given the credit limit they offered and what they knew about Miss E's financial situation.
- NatWest validated Miss E's income by cross-checking her declared income with a credit reference agency (CRA). Their CRA check also confirmed Miss E's credit commitments. And they checked Miss E's household and living costs with her. I haven't seen anything immediately obvious in the information that NatWest had, including Miss E's existing credit, which meant they shouldn't rely on it.
- I'm satisfied NatWest took reasonable steps to determine Miss E's income and expenditure. So, I don't think they needed to ask Miss E to provide further evidence such as bank statements in support of her income and expenditure.
- NatWest's checks showed Miss E had sufficient disposable income to sustain the repayments to be able to settle any outstanding balance within a reasonable period.
- The checks didn't show any adverse information on Miss E's credit file. Or signs of financial vulnerability. While the ability to repay credit without issue doesn't mean that there isn't financial distress. A good repayment history is a fairly reliable indicator that an individual can manage debt responsibly.
- The credit card offered a promotional option of 0% interest until August 2026 for balance transfers. And 0% interest on purchases for three months. I can see Miss E used the promotional offers transferring £6,100 from other credit cards she had that were interest bearing. While Miss E incurred balance transfer fees of £212.89, her monthly repayments to these other credit cards ought to have reduced.

- Based on the information NatWest gathered and what they knew about Miss E's circumstances, there was nothing to suggest Miss E was unlikely to be able to sustainably repay within a reasonable period what she was being lent.
- I don't think NatWest acted unfairly in any other way.

This means I don't think NatWest did anything wrong when they provided the credit card to Miss E.

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 NatWest lent irresponsibly to Miss E or otherwise treated her 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 Miss E hoped for. But for the reasons above, I'm not asking NatWest to do anything differently.

My final decision

My final decision is that I'm not upholding Miss E's complaint about National Westminster Bank Plc.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss E to accept or reject my decision before 5 May 2026.

Anne Scarr
Ombudsman