

complaint

Mrs M has complained that Erudio Student Loans Limited has unfairly added arrears to her account.

Mrs M is represented in her complaint. But for clarity, I'll refer to all submissions made on her behalf as having been made by her personally.

background

Mrs M had a debt with a third party, which was then passed to Erudio. She's explained that in around March or April 2013, she'd contacted the third party to update her address. She later contacted both it and Erudio, to discuss deferring her account, as she'd been doing for a number of years. Although she provided Erudio with the evidence it wanted, it didn't reply to her in a timely fashion. Further, it only agreed to date her deferment to September 2014, as it said that was when she first contacted it, and paid her £50 for the upset caused. However, earlier arrears of £621.99 remained on her account.

Mrs M is very unhappy about this, as she feels she changed her address (as she had with others, such as the electoral roll), and would always have completed forms sent to her, as she'd always been eligible to defer and had always done so in the past. She also explained that she'd had her mail redirected for a time.

Our adjudicator didn't recommend that the complaint should be upheld. This was because she didn't think there was enough evidence to show that Mrs M has sent her change of address details.

As Mrs M disagreed, her complaint's been passed to me for my final decision.

my findings

I've considered all the available evidence and arguments to decide what's fair and reasonable in the circumstances of this complaint.

I accept that Mrs M did change her address with a number of businesses/organisations, for example updating the electoral roll. I'm also aware that she was being organised in her move, by also having mail redirected for a period of time. But I'm afraid, on balance, that this isn't enough to persuade me that she'd also changed her address with the third party (Erudio's predecessor). I know she strongly feels she did, but haven't seen evidence of this that persuades me, on balance, that this is most likely what happened.

I accept how frustrating and upsetting this is, and that Mrs M had deferred many other times, so would have wanted to this time. But unless it receives the appropriate forms, Erudio doesn't process a deferment. As Erudio didn't have the correct address, Mrs M didn't receive the forms. This is why the arrears accrued. It's agreed to address this from when Mrs M contacted it, but it won't go further back. I'm afraid I don't think it's doing anything wrong in this regard.

That said, I agree its customer service was poor. It's already offered £50 compensation in recognition of this, which I think is fair.

my final decision

For the reasons given above, it's my final decision not to uphold this complaint. I make no award against Erudio Student Loans Limited.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs M to accept or reject my decision before 6 June 2016.

Elspeth Wood
ombudsman