

complaint

Ms R complains that Hillesden Securities Limited (trading as dlc) provided her with poor service by not making the necessary investigations in to her account. She says this has meant she will be in debt for longer.

background

Ms R had an outstanding debt which dlc acquired in December 2008. She says that when dlc contacted her about agreeing a repayment schedule she explained that the outstanding balance amount was wrong and that she would not agree a repayment schedule until this was sorted. She said dlc kept contacting her about a repayment schedule and she kept explaining the issue with her outstanding balance and although she was told this would be looked into nothing happened.

Ms R says she then received a solicitor's letter and so she wrote to the solicitor to explain the situation. She says it was not until this happened that the balance was corrected. Ms R says that because the issue was not addressed sooner the time she will be in debt has been lengthened.

The business says that Ms R contacted it seven times since it acquired the debt and that it received the first written complaint in October 2014. It says that Ms R's complaint was about the interest and charges on the account and that because these were applied by the original owner dlc referred the complaint back to the original owner for investigation. It did say that Ms R's complaint could have been referred to its compliance department sooner which would have prevented the issue going on for such a long time. Because of this it sent her a cheque for £50.

The adjudicator accepted that dlc contacted the original debt owner to clarify Ms R's outstanding balance and that it was not responsible for the mistake in the balance. Because of this she did not find that dlc should pay Ms R compensation for the amount she would have paid had the balance been correct.

But, she said that there was a delay in referring Ms R's complaint to the compliance department and that Ms R was given incorrect advice about how to make a complaint. Based on this she said that the £50 compensation offered to Ms R was insufficient and that dlc should pay a further £150 compensation, bringing the total compensation to £200.

The business did not agree to the additional compensation amount.

my findings

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

As the adjudicator has said, dlc is not responsible for the incorrect balance on Ms R's account as this was the result of mistakes made by the previous owner of the debt.

The debt was acquired by dlc in 2008 and it was not long after this that Ms R contacted it with her concerns about the outstanding balance. I accept that dlc was right to refer the complaint to the previous owner of the debt. However I also find that given Ms R raised this

issue a number of times over the coming years, dlc could have done more to address her concerns.

Ms R first raised her concerns in 2008 and then a number of times after this. But it was not until she had provided a written complaint in 2014 that her complaint was referred to dlc's compliance department and investigated. I find that dlc should have done more to deal with Ms R's complaint sooner, and that because this did not happen, Ms R suffered unnecessary stress and inconvenience.

Because of the length of time this issue was outstanding, I do not find that the £50 compensation paid is sufficient and I agree with the adjudicator that a further £150 is reasonable.

my final decision

My final decision is that Hillesden Securities Limited (trading as dlc) should pay Ms R a further £150 compensation for the upset and inconvenience caused by the delay in resolving her complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Ms R to accept or reject my decision before 5 October 2015.

Jane Archer
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