

complaint

Mr J complains on behalf of Mrs J that Arrow Global Limited is wrongly chasing Mrs J for a debt that she doesn't owe.

background

Arrow is collecting a debt that is owed by someone with the same name as Mrs J. Mrs J complained in 2012 about the problem and Arrow agreed that the debt was not hers and paid her £100 and updated its records. Arrow suggested that Mrs J update her credit reference file because incorrect links had been recorded by a third party which had caused the problem. In 2014 Arrow again wrote to Mrs J to tell her that the debt was being passed to a third party. Mrs J complained to Arrow and it accepted that it had incorrectly written to Mrs J because of a system error and paid her £150 compensation. Mrs J does not think that this is enough because of the stress and anxiety that this problem has caused over a number of years.

Our adjudicator did not recommend that the complaint should be upheld. He thought that the compensation paid by Arrow was fair and reasonable in the circumstances to reflect the inconvenience caused by the letter. He explained that this service could only look at things that happened after 1 January 2012 and there was only one letter sent by Arrow after this. Mr J didn't agree with the adjudicator's view and replied to say on behalf of Mrs J that £150 was not enough to compensate for the stress and anxiety caused over a number of years.

my findings

I have considered all the available evidence and arguments to decide what is fair and reasonable in the circumstances of this complaint.

This service is not able to look at things that happened before 1 January 2012. This is because our rules did not allow Mrs J to complain about what Arrow Global was doing until then. I know that Mr J is frustrated by this and I sympathise but as the adjudicator has correctly explained that under the rules of this service I can only look at what happened after 1 January 2012.

Arrow has accepted that it wrongly sent a letter to Mrs J in 2014 and it has paid her £150. Mrs J says it is not enough to compensate her for years of anxiety and I can understand why she is unhappy. This service does not punish or fine businesses and our awards are generally modest. Mrs J wasn't contacted again by Arrow for over two years following her original complaint that she wasn't responsible for the debt. It is reasonable to conclude that during that time Mrs J thought that the problem was resolved. Only one letter was sent in error and as soon as Mrs J complained Arrow paid compensation and confirmed it would close the accounts on its systems to prevent any further contact. I think that this is fair and reasonable in the circumstances and I can't ask it to do any more.

Mr J has said that if Arrow has effectively written off the balance against the true owner of the debt then this is disproportionate to the compensation paid to Mrs J. I can't say whether Arrow has written off the debt and I can't ask it to provide the information to Mr J as this is confidential. I understand why Mr J doesn't think this is fair. But it doesn't change my view about what I think it is reasonable for Arrow to pay to Mrs J.

For these reasons I think that the amount paid by Arrow Global Limited is fair and reasonable and I don't uphold this complaint.

my final decision

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I am required to ask Mr J on behalf of Mrs J to accept or reject my decision before 3 August 2015.

Emma Boothroyd
ombudsman