

complaint

Mr P complains that Lloyds Bank plc was unable to provide adequate details of accounts he has.

background

Since 2000 (or earlier) Mr P has made monthly payments to pay off money owed on three credit card or loan accounts. In 2015 he asked Lloyds for details of the accounts: including what was owed originally, how much he had paid off and what was left to pay. Lloyds responded saying that Mr P had not been receiving statements because it had not had his correct address. Lloyds assured him that all his payments had been sent to relevant accounts and gave figures for the outstanding balance on each account. When Lloyds said it was unable to provide details of the amounts originally borrowed and how much he had paid in total, Mr P remained dissatisfied.

Our adjudicator did not recommend that the complaint was upheld. She said Lloyds had been able to provide a history of payments since 2000. But because of the passage of time the original credit agreements were no longer available. Lloyds was not obliged to hold information indefinitely, and we could not make Lloyds provide information it no longer had. Mr P had said to the adjudicator that he thought that, since Lloyds couldn't produce information about the origins of the debts, they should be written off. She explained that Lloyds had declined to do that and that we could not compel it to write off the debts.

Mr P remained dissatisfied. He still thought it was not fair that he was expected to pay off the debts when Lloyds couldn't tell him how they arose and how much he had already paid off. He did not consider the list of transactions showing his payments was adequate.

my findings

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

It seems that all three accounts defaulted in about 2000. From the information we have, it is clear that since then Mr P has made regular payments which have reduced the amount owing from a total of about £17,000 to less than £10,000. It seems that all the payments have gone to reducing the debt and Mr P has not been incurring any interest or charges.

As the adjudicator said, given how long ago the debts arose, I do not have grounds to criticise Lloyds for its inability to produce information on the origins of the debts. I cannot see that Mr P would have been likely to make the payments as he did if he had not accepted that he did owe the money.

It is to Mr P's credit that he continued to make the payments regularly for so long. I can understand why he would like to have the debts written off. But I am afraid that, from what I know at present, I cannot see that we would have grounds to say that Lloyds must do that. If Mr P is struggling to make the payments, we could give him details of organisations which could give him free debt advice.

my final decision

My decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr P to accept or reject my decision before 21 December 2015.

Hilary Bainbridge
ombudsman