

complaint

Mr C complains that Barclays Bank PLC, trading as Barclaycard, irresponsibly gave him a credit card that was unaffordable.

background

Mr C applied for the credit card in 2013 and was given a credit limit of just under £3,000. He says at the time he already had a number of loans and had a gambling problem. Mr C also says the high credit limit increased his financial difficulties. And that if Barclaycard had checked his bank account it would have seen that the credit card was unaffordable and lending to him with a gambling problem was irresponsible.

Barclaycard doesn't accept making a mistake and says it checked Mr C's credit file before approving his application. It says its checks showed the credit limit was affordable and it didn't need to see Mr C's bank statements. Barclaycard also says Mr C didn't make it aware of any gambling problems. But it has refunded the last six months interest of just under £200 as a gesture of goodwill.

Mr C brought his complaint to us but our investigator didn't uphold it. He thought Barclaycard had carried out reasonable checks before approving Mr C's application. He also didn't think there was any evidence that Mr C had told Barclaycard about his gambling problems. The investigator didn't think Barclaycard had lent irresponsibly or that the lending was unaffordable.

Mr C doesn't accept that view and says Barclaycard should have tried to find out if he had a gambling problem. He also says that other lenders would've checked his bank statements. Mr C would like all of the interest he's paid refunded and the balance he owes to be paid interest free.

my findings

I've considered all the available evidence and arguments to decide what's fair and reasonable in the circumstances of this complaint. Having done so I've come to the same overall conclusions as the investigator for the same reasons. I realise Mr C will be disappointed by my decision.

I've looked at the information Mr C gave Barclaycard when he opened the credit card account. Having done so I can see that Mr C said he was in full time employment but I can't see that he told Barclaycard about any gambling problems. So I don't think Barclaycard could reasonably have known about those issues or could've found that out from the application or Mr C's credit file. I appreciate Mr C says Barclaycard should have tried to find that information out but I disagree as I don't think based on the information it had there was any reason to suspect that Mr C had a gambling problem.

I'm satisfied that Barclaycard checked the information Mr C gave it against his credit file. I've also looked at Mr C's credit file at the time of the application. And I can see that whilst Mr C had loans totalling about £7,000 he'd not missed any repayments and there were no defaults recorded on his file. I can also see that no other credit searches were made in the six months before the credit card application. I think on balance that suggested that repeated applications for credit hadn't been made.

So I don't think Barclaycard's actions were irresponsible in approving Mr C's application. Or that the lending was unaffordable based on the evidence Mr C provided in the application about his income and the evidence contained in his credit file.

I also don't think Barclaycard should've looked at Mr C's bank statements in circumstances where I'm satisfied it carried out reasonable checks. I appreciate Mr C says other lender's have looked at those statements in the past. But I'm not aware of the circumstances of those applications and for how much he wanted to borrow –so I can't fairly comment on those applications.

Banks and building societies should treat cases of financial difficulties positively and sympathetically. I'm satisfied that in this case Barclaycard has acted in such a way by refunding interest and by offering Mr C the opportunity to speak to its specialist department.

my final decision

My final decision is that I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr C to accept or reject my decision before 14 September 2018.

David Singh
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