

complaint

Mr M is unhappy that having settled his account with Vanquis Bank Limited in full in 2014, his records still show details of the arrangement he entered into. He'd like Vanquis to amend the records to remove the ongoing reference to this arrangement.

background

Mr M entered into a payment arrangement with Vanquis in 2011 and settled his account with it in full in 2014. But when he then checked his credit record, he realised details of this arrangement were still visible and would be so until 2020. Mr M has said that if he'd defaulted, his record would have been cleared after six years and so he feels this is unfair and that it wasn't made clear to him when he agreed to the arrangement. He's also unhappy with the way Vanquis has dealt with his complaint.

Vanquis rejected the complaint. It said the records accurately reflect the arrangement that was made. If Mr M had defaulted, this would have had much more serious consequences for his credit rating and the arrangement had been in his interest. It felt it hadn't done anything wrong in this case.

An adjudicator considered the complaint but said Vanquis had correctly recorded the details of the arrangement and how long it had lasted. And although she accepted that details of a default would have dropped off his credit record sooner, she thought the effect of a default would have been much more serious for Mr M than the payment arrangement he'd entered in to. She felt Vanquis hadn't acted unfairly in dealing with it in this way and, as the records were correct, she wouldn't ask Vanquis to take any steps to amend them.

But Mr B disagreed and said Vanquis had failed to explain the implications of this arrangement before he'd agreed to it. He was also unhappy at the way it had dealt with his complaint, in particular the failure to send a final response and the delay.

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 conclusion as the adjudicator and for broadly the same reasons.

I've taken on board Mr M's concern at how long this arrangement will be visible on his credit record and his view that it wasn't necessarily in his best interest. But I'm not satisfied this is the case.

While Vanquis has been unable to find the call record of when Mr M agreed to the arrangement, I can't criticise it for this as it doesn't have to keep records indefinitely. But at the time the choices were either to default or to enter into an arrangement. I agree with the adjudicator that a default would have had a serious impact on Mr M's credit rating and more so than a payment arrangement. For that reason I can't agree it would necessarily have been the better option or that Vanquis was acting unfairly in proposing the payment arrangement

And although I appreciate Mr M's concern that information about this arrangement is still visible, the records also make it clear the account was settled in full in 2014. Any future lender will be aware that Mr M had successfully paid off the debt and so I don't consider the

information recorded is unfair or will necessarily have the impact on his credit rating that he suggests. What is important is that the records are correct. I'm satisfied that they are and for that reason, I won't be asking Vanquis to take any steps to amend them.

Finally I've reviewed the complaint correspondence to see whether Vanquis has dealt with this reasonably. Having done so I can see Vanquis sent a final response on 2 October and then followed this up with another, more detailed, letter in December. Although Mr M has said he didn't receive the first letter, Vanquis has provided a copy and I've seen nothing to suggest it wasn't sent at the time. It seems it may have gone astray after Mr M moved house in 2015 but, taken overall, I'm satisfied Vanquis did investigate Mr M's complaint and send its response within a reasonable time.

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 M to accept or reject my decision before 5 August 2016.

Cerys Jones
ombudsman