

The complaint

Mr C's complaint is about the service he received from Provident Personal Credit Limit (trading as Provident) in relation to the problems he had when repaying his loan. Mr C said due to the problems he had, he was left with no choice but to settle the loan early.

What happened

Mr C was approved for his final loan of £2,500 loan in May 2019. The loan was to be repaid in 104 weekly repayments of £57.50. Mr C repaid the loan in full in January 2020.

One of our adjudicators looked at Mr C's complaint. She agreed that Provident could have provided better service and that Mr C had been inconvenienced as a result of the issues he experienced. But she didn't think Mr C lost out significantly as a result of these issues.

The adjudicator felt that Provident's offer of £50 compensation as well as its apology was fair in these circumstances. So, she didn't ask Provident to do more than what it already offered.

Provident appears to have accepted our adjudicator's opinion. Mr C asked for his complaint to be looked into again but didn't provide any further comments or evidence for this service to consider.

As no agreement could be reached the complaint has been passed to me for a final decision.

What I've decided – and why

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

I've also taken into account the law, any relevant regulatory rules and good industry practice at the time the loan was provided.

Provident has accepted that something went wrong in its dealing with Mr C– which is why it sent him a cheque for £50. In this decision I'll focus on whether Provident needs to do anything else.

To start with, it seems that Mr C had an arrangement whereby Provident would come to his home to collect his loan repayments on the last Friday of the month. These payments represented the payments due for the whole month. But the agent went on holiday and no one turned up to collect the payment from Mr C in September 2019. Then a couple of weeks later, a different agent turned up at Mr C's door advising him of the arrears on his account. Mr C says this agent didn't have their identification badge.

From this point, and after the visit from the second agent, Mr C had to make repayments for the loan over the phone and then text the agent when the payment had been made. Mr C was unhappy about this, because it wasn't what he had signed up to – which were door

steps payments. And it seems that due to Mr C's unhappiness with the situation he arranged to repay the loan balance, in full, at the end of January 2020.

The statement of account shows the way Mr C ran his loan didn't result in any additional late fees or charges were added as a result of the missed repayment for September 2019. We asked Mr C about his credit file and whether there was an impact on that. After all, Mr C was expecting an agent to come to his door to collect his repayment. And an agent failed to do so. But to be clear, I am not making a finding as to whether any adverse credit file exists.

It's clear to me, and is accepted by Provident, that Mr C was inconvenienced by what happened. For example, someone didn't collect the payment when arranged and then Mr C had been inconvenienced and had to take time out to make calls to Provident in order for him to make his repayments – rather than paying the agent directly.

I appreciate Mr C wants 10% of the balance he repaid as he had to put in ten complaints about the service he has received. I've carefully thought about this. But I don't think the settlement Mr C wants is warranted in the circumstances of this case.

The awards that we may make for trouble and upset are not designed to punish Provident for an error(s) that have been made. Any award we may recommend is designed to reflect any inconvenience that an individual has experienced.

Ultimately, I think the lender's offer to pay £50 is fair and reasonable, taking into account the inconvenience that Mr C experienced – which I've outlined above. However, if Provident has not paid the £50 to Mr C, then I instruct it to do so. But if Provident has already made the payment then it doesn't need to do anything more.

I appreciate Mr C may be disappointed by my decision and that this wasn't the outcome he was hoping for, but I hope he understands why I have reached the decision that I have.

My final decision

For the reasons I've explained above, I'm not upholding Mr C's complaint.

But if Provident Personal Credit Limited hasn't paid the compensation it previously offered then it should now arrange to do so.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr C to accept or reject my decision before 7 October 2020.

Robert Walker
Ombudsman