

## **The complaint**

Miss W complains about the level of service provided by Provident Personal Credit Limited (trading as Satsuma) in regard to her instalment loans. She wants compensation for the trouble and upset caused.

## **What happened**

Miss W had two loans with Satsuma that were passed to a debt collection agency. A payment plan was agreed, and the agency told Miss W how much remained outstanding to clear the debt. Satsuma then recalled the accounts and told Miss W that an amount remained owing.

Miss W was unhappy that she had been told the balance had been cleared, with the agents' customer service, that she couldn't access her accounts online, and with its handling of her complaint. Satsuma said it should have registered Miss W's complaint earlier and agreed she'd been told the wrong balance outstanding. It waived her £80 outstanding balances as a gesture of goodwill and the agency paid her £30 compensation for her trouble and upset. But Miss W wanted further compensation for the severe anxiety she said had been caused.

Our adjudicator didn't recommend that the complaint should be upheld. He thought there had been errors but that the compensation offered was sufficient for these. He thought Satsuma was entitled by its terms and conditions to use another agency to help manage its accounts and it wasn't obliged to tell Miss W that it was recalling these. He couldn't see evidence that the staff had been rude to Miss W. And he didn't think it was unreasonable for Satsuma to close the online accounts when they were transferred to another agency.

Miss W replied that she thought Satsuma had messed her around and hadn't provided the requested evidence of her balances. She wanted her complaint reviewed by an ombudsman, so it's come 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 can understand that Miss W felt frustrated when she found that the accounts, which she thought were settled, still had balances outstanding. Satsuma agrees that Miss W was given incorrect information about her balances. And it agrees that it should have registered her complaint earlier.

When a business makes a mistake, as Satsuma accepts it has done here, we expect it to restore the consumer's position, as far as it's able to do so. And we also consider the impact the error had on the consumer.

Miss W thought her accounts had been cleared and closed. But I can see that she was given incorrect information about the amounts outstanding. This was due to payment reversals she requested that were actioned by the agency, but that Miss W later decided to withdraw. There was then some confusion about this as the accounts were recalled by Satsuma. From what I can see, Miss W was refunded the reversed amounts.

I can see that Satsuma's statement of what was still owed was correct. But I agree there was confusion and that Miss W was provided with incorrect information. To put things right, Satsuma waived the £80 still owing on the loans and the accounts are now closed. It's also provided Miss W with a statement of accounts. The agency also paid Miss W £30 compensation for providing incorrect information.

I can't see that the errors caused Miss W any financial loss. And I think Satsuma responded reasonably promptly to Miss W's concern when she raised it. So I think this puts Miss W back into the position she thought she should be in.

Like the adjudicator, I've looked at Satsuma's terms and conditions for its loan agreements. And I agree that it's entitled to use other agencies to manage accounts and collect payments. I can't see that it was obliged to tell Miss W that it had recalled her accounts. I think Satsuma isn't obliged to provide Miss W with online access to her accounts. So I can't say that it did anything wrong in this and I can't see anything untoward in its actions.

Satsuma agreed that it should have registered Miss W's complaint sooner. It took her three emails to achieve this. And I can see that this caused Miss W some frustration. But I don't think this warrants any compensation.

I've looked at Satsuma's emails to Miss W and I can't see evidence that the staff were rude to her.

I can understand that Miss W felt messed around when she was trying to clear her debts with Satsuma. But I think Satsuma has acted fairly and reasonably to restore Miss W's position and has taken into account the impact its errors have had on her. I don't think it needs to do anything further.

### **My final decision**

For the reasons given above, my final decision is that I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss W to accept or reject my decision before 11 August 2021.

Phillip Berechree  
**Ombudsman**