

## **The complaint**

Mr S complains that PRA Group (UK) Limited reported a third party's default on his credit file.

## **What happened**

Last year, Mr S contacted a credit reference agency after he found a defaulted account from PRA recorded on his credit file he didn't recognise. Mr S has told us he challenged the entry with the credit reference agency and went on contact PRA to dispute the information on his credit file.

PRA says that after it was notified of Mr S' concerns it looked at the account recorded on his credit file. PRA explained that the account it was reporting was for someone with similar details (the same name and date of birth as Mr S) and that it had been linked to his credit file by one of the credit reference agencies.

PRA issued a final response to Mr S on 22 May 2023 and advised it had contacted the three main credit reference agencies to check how the account appeared on his credit file. PRA said only one of the three credit reference agencies was reporting the account in question on Mr S' credit file. PRA added that the credit reference agency had found an address link on the credit file it operated for Mr S which had caused the defaulted account to show on his credit file. But the credit reference agency had advised the link was removed so the information should no longer be recorded on Mr S' credit file.

Mr S referred his complaint to this service and it was passed to an investigator. The investigator wasn't persuaded PRA had made a mistake in this case. They pointed out PRA's claim that whilst it was reporting an account for someone with similar details to Mr S, it was recorded at different address, not his address. The investigator was satisfied that PRA hadn't linked the account in question to Mr S or done anything that would've led to it being reported on Mr S' credit file.

Mr S asked to appeal and said that because PRA had recorded an account that wasn't his it had failed to report accurate information. As Mr S asked to appeal, his complaint has been passed to me to make a 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 been relatively brief in setting out the background above as all parties broadly agree concerning the overall timeline for Mr S' complaint. I understand Mr S found a defaulted account on his credit file with one of the credit reference agencies. And Mr S has confirmed that account doesn't belong to him and was recorded in error.

PRA doesn't dispute Mr S' claim the account belongs to someone else. PRA says the account in question belongs to someone who shares the same name and date of birth as Mr

S. And PRA's provided systems evidence to show that whilst it was reporting an account for someone who shares the same details as Mr S, it was registered at a different address to his. So whilst I can see PRA was recording a default, it wasn't doing so at Mr S' address.

PRA's final response explains that one of the credit reference agencies had linked Mr S' address to the address it is reporting the account at. As a result, the default was linked to Mr S' credit file without any involvement of PRA. PRA also said that credit reference agency had taken steps to remove the account link so the default should no longer show on Mr S' credit file.

When a consumer contacts a business to dispute an entry, as Mr S has here, we'd expect the business reporting to investigate and take the appropriate steps to ensure the information reported is accurate. I'm satisfied that PRA did investigate the issues Mr S raised and appropriately contacted the credit reference agencies to find out what had happened. And I'm satisfied that when PRA found out why the default was showing on Mr S' credit file it asked for the address link to be removed so it would no longer appear.

I understand why Mr S is frustrated that an account he doesn't recognise appeared on his credit file. But I think it's fair to note that whilst PRA is reporting an account for an individual that shares Mr S' details it wasn't seeking to record it on his credit file. And, for the reasons I've given above, I'm satisfied that once Mr S raised his concerns with PRA it took action to contact the credit reference agencies and make arrangements for it to be removed. As I haven't seen anything that shows PRA made a mistake or treated Mr S unfairly I'm not telling it to do anything else.

### **My final decision**

My decision is that I don't uphold Mr S' complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr S to accept or reject my decision before 29 February 2024.

Marco Manente  
**Ombudsman**