

complaint

Mr L complained about Provident Personal Credit Limited's decision not to refund a repayment he'd made towards three loans he'd taken out.

background

In early November 2018 Mr L repaid about £50 to Provident towards three loans. He then asked for it back because he said he had no money. Mr L said Provident initially agreed to do this but a few days later his request was declined.

Mr L complained to Provident but it didn't uphold his complaint. It said that although it had told Mr L it would take 3-5 working days for his refund to clear, it subsequently decided, following a review, that the repayment wouldn't be refunded. It also said that if Mr L was experiencing financial hardship, it could help him organise affordable repayments.

Mr L wasn't satisfied and complained to this service. Our investigator said that Provident hadn't acted unfairly as Mr L had made a repayment towards the loans and it was within its rights not to give that back when he asked for it to be refunded. Mr L also thought he should be reimbursed for the cost of his calls to Provident but when our investigator put this to Provident, it said its calls were free. Mr L was not happy with the investigator's assessment and asked for an ombudsman to review the complaint.

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 agree with the investigator that Provident doesn't need to do any more. Let me explain why.

Mr L has three loans with Provident and he's agreed to make weekly repayments totalling about £25. In early November, Mr L made a repayment of about £50 towards all three loans. Having done so, he asked for a refund as he was concerned he didn't have enough money. When he spoke to Provident it told him it would take between 3 and 5 working days to arrange for the refund. Mr L believed that meant he would be getting the money back and was therefore disappointed when it told him a few days later it had decided not to issue a refund. Mr L believes Provident should have issued a refund and notes that when he asked for a subsequent payment to be refunded to him later the same month, Provident agreed to do that.

Mr L has taken out three loans with Provident and entered into an agreement to repay a certain amount per week. Once he paid the amount due in early November I don't think Provident were under any obligation to refund him the money when he asked for it back. I can see that it decided to do just that later the same month but I think it would be unfair to say it should have refunded the first repayments just because it decided to refund the second repayments. As a responsible lender, I would expect Provident to respond reasonably to any issues of financial hardship and, in this instance, I can see that it offered to help Mr L organise affordable repayments and also gave him details of three organisations that might be able to give him free and independent advice.

Mr L also said he should be reimbursed for the cost of calls he made to Provident. However, as Provident has telephone numbers available that are free to use from both landlines and

mobiles, Mr L shouldn't have incurred any call costs and I see no reason why it should therefore give him any payment for his calls.

I don't think Provident have done anything wrong in refusing to refund the payments Mr L made in early November 2018 and I don't think it needs to do anything more.

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 L to accept or reject my decision before 28 February 2019.

Richard Walker
ombudsman