

## **The complaint**

Mr M complains that National Westminster Bank Plc (who I'll call Nat West) declined his loan application despite encouraging him to apply and that they, therefore, reported a credit search to his credit file that shouldn't have been necessary.

## **What happened**

The details of this complaint are well known to both parties, so I won't repeat them again here. Instead, I'll focus on giving my reasons for my 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 know it will disappoint Mr M, but I agree with the investigator's opinion. I'll explain why.

Where the information I've got is incomplete, unclear, or contradictory, as some of it is here I have to base my decision on the balance of probabilities.

I've read and considered the whole file, but I'll concentrate my comments on what I think is relevant. If I don't comment on any specific point it's not because I've failed to take it on board and think about it but because I don't think I need to comment on it in order to reach what I think is the right outcome.

I can understand Mr M's frustration as he's clearly a man who wants to improve his credit standing and is disappointed it may have reduced a little because of the search Nat West completed on his credit file. But while I understand Nat West's messages may have encouraged him to make a loan application, they didn't promise him that his application would be successful and he was warned before he made his full application, that a full credit search would be completed. I don't think Nat West did anything wrong in that regard and it's not for this Service to tell them how to market their products. Mr M has explained that Nat West have changed the text on the messages they send out, but that's an action they are free to take.

There were some issues during Mr M's application. I've seen, for instance, that there was a system problem and that he was sent correspondence encouraging his application after it was declined. I can see that Nat West paid him £100 in compensation for the distress and inconvenience caused and I think, on balance, that was sufficient.

## **My final decision**

For the reasons I've given above, 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 6 February 2024.

Phillip McMahon  
**Ombudsman**