

The complaint

Mr W complains that Barclays Bank UK PLC misled him about when a mortgage offer would expire. He says because of this he missed the chance to apply for better rates elsewhere before rates increased. Mr W asks that Barclays applies the fixed interest rate product in the offer to his mortgage.

What happened

Mr W started a re-mortgage application with Barclays in February 2022, via a broker. Barclays issued a mortgage offer in March 2022, with a fixed interest rate product. The offer expired in early August 2022.

Mr W's mortgage hadn't completed by early August 2022. Barclays agreed to extend the offer to 23 August 2022 to allow the mortgage to complete. It issued a new mortgage offer which gave two different dates for when it expired: 23 August 2022 and February 2023. Mr W's re-mortgage didn't complete before 23 August 2022.

Mr W re-applied with a new interest rate product in September 2022. Barclays issued a mortgage offer and the mortgage completed later in October 2022. However, the interest rate products available to Mr W in September 2022 had higher rates than the interest rate product in the previous mortgage offers.

Mr W says if he'd known the mortgage offer issued in August 2022 wasn't valid until February 2023, he'd have looked for a better rate with another provider. He says it's common sense that he'd have got a better rate.

Our investigator said it was clear that the first mortgage offer was only extended to 23 August 2022. Mr W didn't agree and asked for an ombudsman to re-consider the complaint.

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.

Where the evidence is incomplete, inconclusive or contradictory, I reach my decision on the balance of probabilities – in other words, what I consider is most likely to have happened in light of the available evidence and the wider circumstances.

Barclays issued a mortgage offer in March 2022 which expired on 9 August 2022. Mr W's mortgage hadn't completed by then. There's nothing to suggest this was due to an error by Barclays.

As an exception to its usual policy, Barclays agreed to extend the offer by two weeks to 23 August 2022. It issued a new mortgage offer dated 19 August 2022.

Mr W says he was misled by the mortgage offer. This is because it had more than one expiry date. The first page says the offer is valid until 11 February 2023. Mr W says he relied on this being correct. He says he'd have applied elsewhere if he'd known it wasn't and is sure

he'd have secured a better rate than he has now.

Barclays says its system automatically generates mortgage offers with a six-month expiry date. It added a special condition to the 19 August 2022 mortgage offer which says:

This mortgage offer is to reflect the previous mortgage application made under [number]. This mortgage offer will expire on 23/08/2022 to allow completion. This expiry date supersedes any other expiry date noted in the offer.

I'd expect Mr W to read the mortgage offer. If he was unsure about the expiry dates or which one took precedence, he could have asked his broker or Barclays to explain.

I also need to take the wider circumstances into account. The 19 August 2022 mortgage offer was issued only because Barclays agreed to extend the expiry date by two weeks. This was an exception to its usual policy. It's unlikely it would have agreed to do this without there having been a discussion with Mr W's broker. As the application was made by a broker, it would be the broker rather than Barclays that explained the basis on which Barclays agreed to extend the offer to Mr W. Barclays says it sent a reminder to Mr W's broker that the mortgage needed to complete by 23 August 2022 to secure the product.

Taking all this into account, I think Barclays did make Mr W reasonably aware that the mortgage offer would expire on 23 August 2022.

Mr W says his personal circumstances meant he was under pressure to complete the re-mortgage, and this meant he had to make another application to Barclays. The first mortgage offer expired in early August 2022. If Mr W wanted to apply elsewhere to secure a better rate he could have done so as soon as he realised his re-mortgage wouldn't complete before this (or indeed before 23 August 2022).

Mr W's broker started a new application with Barclays on 17 September 2022. There were issues with affordability and the amount of the loan Mr W applied for exceeded the loan to value ratio for the product he'd chosen. Nonetheless, Barclays issued an offer and the mortgage completed on 11 October 2022. I can't see that there were any delays by Barclays with this application.

Mr W said he had five completion figures to complete the fixed rate mortgage, causing serious delays. It's unclear what Mr W means by this. But, as I said, I can't see that Barclays caused delays with Mr W's mortgage applications. I haven't seen anything to suggest it was responsible for his re-mortgage not completing before the first mortgage offer expired, or that it caused any delays with the completion of his mortgage in October 2022.

Mr W says he should have been treated as vulnerable due to his personal circumstances (he'd separated from his partner). I need to take into account that the mortgage application was submitted by a broker that dealt with Barclays on Mr W's behalf. I appreciate that Mr W is disappointed that his re-mortgage didn't complete in time for him to benefit from the fixed interest rate he'd first applied for. But based on the available evidence, I don't think this was due to any errors by Barclays and I don't think Barclays treated Mr W unfairly. It follows that I don't think it's fair and reasonable in the circumstances to require Barclays to apply a lower interest rate product to Mr W's account or pay compensation to him.

My final decision

My decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr W to accept or

reject my decision before 8 November 2023.

Ruth Stevenson
Ombudsman