

How to improve your credit file information

We all like to be accepted, especially for something as useful as a credit card. So how do you improve your chances of getting a yes?

Keep up-to-date with your existing credit

Paying your current credit or loan repayments on time is a good idea anyway, but it also helps to show that you're likely to keep doing it in the future.

Be patient, not persistent

If you're turned down, wait a few months before trying again. If you simply keep re-applying, it could lower your credit score which will actually make it even harder to be accepted.

Get yourself on the electoral register

It's the first thing that any institution checks – that you're registered at the address on your application.

Don't leave out previous addresses

If you've moved a lot in the last three years, don't be tempted to leave out previous addresses you've lived at – you might think it's simpler, but it could look like you're trying to hide unpaid bills from before.

Be honest about your credit history

If you've had problems in the past and you've been unable to make your repayments, or you've had County Court Judgments (CCJs) against you, it's better to admit it.

Settle bad debt

Although unpaid credit and CCJs remain on your credit file for six years, once you've paid them off they'll be marked as settled. This could be taken into account in your favour in the future.

Get the facts

If you're still puzzled about why you've been turned down, contact a credit reference agency to see a copy of your credit file. This will show you all the information that lenders can see about you. The main credit reference agencies are [Experian](#), [Equifax](#) and [Callcredit](#).

Get mistakes put right

If you see something that isn't right, dispute it – you can appeal to the agency directly, and to the lender. You can also add a note to your file, to explain any special circumstances such as a sudden illness which had an effect on how you paid your bills, for example.