

Anticipated acquisition by Non-Standard Finance PLC of Provident Financial PLC

Decision on relevant merger situation

ME/6797/19

1. On 22 February 2019, Non-Standard Finance plc (**NSF**) made an offer to acquire the entire issued share capital of Provident Financial plc (**Provident**) (the **Offer**).
2. One of the conditions of the Offer was that NSF had to obtain regulatory approval from the Prudential Regulation Authority (the **PRA Condition**).
3. The initial period for consideration of the merger by the Competition and Markets Authority (**CMA**) under section 34ZA(3) of the Act started on 29 May 2019 and the statutory 40 working day deadline for a decision was therefore 23 July 2019.
4. On 4 June 2019, NSF announced that the PRA Condition would not be satisfied by midnight on 5 June 2019 – the deadline by which all conditions to the Offer had to be satisfied or waived – and that, as a consequence, the Offer would lapse.
5. NSF has since confirmed to the CMA that the Offer has lapsed.
6. Accordingly, on the basis of the information available to it, the CMA does not believe that it is or may be the case that arrangements are in progress or in contemplation which, if carried into effect, will result in the creation of a relevant merger situation.
7. The CMA does not therefore have a duty to refer the Offer under section 33 of the Enterprise Act 2002.

Eleni Gouliou
Director, Mergers
Competition and Markets Authority
11 June 2019