

## **The complaint**

Mr S complains he was unable to set up online banking with TSB Bank plc (TSB).

## **What happened**

Mr S says in May 2020 with the help of his daughter, he attempted to set up an online banking facility with TSB so he could access his bank accounts, rather than visiting a branch, given his vulnerability at the time of the Covid pandemic. Mr S says TSB's systems didn't recognise his details and he was unable to access his bank accounts online as he wished. Mr S says his daughter complained to TSB on his behalf in June 2020, but TSB didn't know what was causing the problem and said they would refer the matter to its technical team. Mr S says he didn't hear anything further from TSB and chased them over this matter at the end of July 2020, and was told a letter had been sent to him in June 2020, but that hadn't been received by him so a copy of that letter was sent.

Mr S says the letter didn't help to resolve the issue over the setting up of the online banking facility, so Mr S's daughter on his behalf, emailed TSB again in August 2020 but hearing nothing more she telephoned TSB again in November 2020, to try and sort out the problem. Mr S says it became clear that nothing had been done over the issue, despite the emails and previous telephone calls made and it was causing severe inconvenience and stress to him. Mr S says he has health issues and simply wanted to access his bank accounts online, although he had been reluctant to do this previously.

Mr S says although TSB more recently explained, there was an issue concerning his User ID and increased its offer of compensation to £75, he is still unable to use online banking. Mr S doesn't feel the offer goes far enough and is looking for TSB to pay him £500, for the trouble and stress this has caused him.

TSB says it has apologised for the issues Mr S faced when he originally tried to set up his online banking and paid him compensation for that. Latterly TSB says it increased its compensation offer albeit the error with the USER ID/Password was not their fault. TSB says it asked Mr S to contact them if he had further issues setting up his online banking, but it hasn't heard anymore from him.

Mr S wasn't happy with TSB's response and referred the matter to this service.

The investigator looked at all the available information and upheld Mr S's complaint. The investigator felt TSB didn't provide enough information initially, to Mr S to help set up the online banking facility. The investigator says TSB should now increase its compensation to £150 to fairly reflect the time taken and inconvenience caused to Mr S. The investigator says TSB have now offered for one of its team members to contact Mr S to help with the online banking registration.

Neither TSB nor Mr S agreed with the investigator's view and asked for the matter to be referred to an ombudsman for a final 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.

Having done so, I have come to the same outcome as the investigator and I will explain how I have come to my decision.

I can understand it would have been frustrating and upsetting for Mr S to have attempted to set up online banking with TSB, only to see his attempts to do so fail.

I should mention that it is not the role of this service to scrutinise TSB's complaints process or to tell TSB how it should deal with complaints more widely. So here, while Mr S and his daughter are unhappy over the time it took TSB to do deal with the second complaint when Mr S's initial complaint in June 2020 hadn't been resolved, I will not be commenting on that. That said, I will consider if TSB were at fault for the fact Mr S was unable to set up online banking, and if it did enough to help him resolve the issues he faced.

Mr S's daughter has told this service that her father wasn't in the best of health and that is why he finally agreed to set up online banking, given it was difficult for him to make branch visits as he had previously. Mr S's daughter has told this service despite emailing and telephoning TSB it hasn't been able to resolve her father's issue of registering for online banking and this has caused a great deal of inconvenience and stress to him.

While I understand the points Mr S and his daughter make here I should also say, when making a full and impartial decision, I have to take into account the fact this happened during the Covid pandemic which affected both businesses and customers alike.

TSB have accepted initially there was a known technical error where customers using lower case format to input their postcode onto the online banking mandate, meant it wouldn't be accepted. From the response letter TSB sent Mr S in June 2020 it explained that and paid a £50 compensation payment - it's fair to say at that point TSB believed it had explained this fully and resolved the issue. Mr S and his daughter says this final response letter wasn't received and it had to be resent in July 2020. I can't say TSB can be held responsible for its non-delivery as the address details are correct, although during this time of the Covid pandemic, it's fair to say the postal service had experienced problems across the country, and that may have contributed to any problems Mr S may have faced here.

What seems to have happened from the information I have seen, is Mr S continued to receive messages asking him for "memorable information" when trying to set up online banking, when he hadn't set this up yet. What is important here is it appears Mr S attempted to create his User I/D -Password using his name as part of that process, but that isn't permitted, and it is why the application failed. I have been provided details of the login process and it shows under "*tips for a good password*" that individuals names are not permitted for this.

TSB says Mr S hasn't made further attempts to try to set up online banking or contact TSB after he was told to do so if he experienced further issues, and make the point it paid a further £25 as way of an apology, for not being clear about the login process.

While TSB have told this service that it has now updated its online banking screen when users attempt to create a password using their personal details - this only came into place from the final quarter of 2021. It's fair to say this suggests TSB recognised this was a problem and with that in mind, I am satisfied if that had been in place when Mr S experienced the issues he did, this would have been helpful at that time, but having that

said, Mr S could have also perhaps contacted TSB's digital team, as he was asked to, in TSB's letter to him in February 2021.

While I understand Mr S has been inconvenienced here and he feels a more substantial compensation payment from TSB is warranted, it's not my role to penalise business when mistakes are made. TSB have now offered to have its manager from its digital team to contact Mr S to talk him through the online banking set up process, in addition to the compensation payment it has already made. So, on balance while that seems a reasonable offer and although I have taken into account the staff constraints that Covid presented back in June 2020, I'm of the view that solution was in all likelihood the way forward, earlier on in this process. So, with that in mind, I agree with the investigator that an additional £75 by way of apology would be more appropriate here.

I will leave it with Mr S to contact our investigator, who can give him the contact details at TSB who can talk him or his daughter through the process of setting up online banking, if that is what he still wishes to do.

While I accept both parties will be disappointed with my decision here, I am satisfied this is a fair outcome.

### **Putting things right**

I instruct TSB Bank plc to pay Mr S a further £75 by way of compensation for the trouble and upset caused.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that I uphold this complaint.

I instruct TSB Bank plc to pay Mr S a further £75 by way of compensation for the trouble and upset caused.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr S to accept or reject my decision before 27 April 2022.

Barry White  
**Ombudsman**