

## The complaint

Mr B complains that Bank of Scotland plc trading as Halifax ("Halifax") gave him incorrect information when he contacted them about an international payment he tried to make.

## What happened

Mr B is a customer of Halifax. He was due to fly abroad on holiday, and before his flight, he tried to make an international payment for around £300 using his mobile banking app. He says this payment needed to be made before his arrival.

Mr B says he checked his account and couldn't see that the payment had been made, so called Halifax and he says they told him to make the payment again as it hadn't gone through.

Mr B did and he says that a few moments later, he received two emails from Halifax, both confirming that an international payment of around £300 will be processed within the next few days.

Mr B says he contacted Halifax to stop the duplicate payment from going through, but he says Halifax were unable to. Mr B complained to Halifax and he says he was unhappy with their response and service he received. Mr B complained again and Halifax got back in touch, apologising for the service they provided when he complained. They also agreed that Mr B had been misinformed and given wrong information about his international payment enquiry. Mr B has since had the money from his second payment returned to him.

Halifax offered to credit Mr B's account with £100 by way of apology, along with any costs, losses and expenses Mr B may have incurred. Halifax broke down the additional costs as:

- £10 towards Mr B's call costs.
- £21.40 for the difference from the initial amount sent and the money returned.
- £3.38 in interest charges.
- £5 for deprived funds, which they say is 8% gross interest per annum for the time Mr B didn't have his money (Halifax say they calculated the amount of gross interest to be £0.63, but they rounded it up to £5).

So, in total, Halifax offered to compensate Mr B with £139.78, which he declined.

Mr B referred his complaint to our service. He is unhappy as he says he only had limited funds in his account. And by a second payment leaving his account, he says his limited funds and spending money were further reduced while on holiday. He says his week away was miserable as it was on his mind to get this sorted with Halifax.

Our investigator looked to see if Halifax had done enough to put things right following their error. And he found that they didn't need to take any further action and thought their offer of compensation to Mr B was fair. He reached this conclusion as he found that Mr B had access to his overdraft funds, which lessened the impact of Halifax's error, and he also considered Halifax's actions to ensure Mr B wasn't at a financial loss.

Mr B didn't agree with the outcome the investigator reached. He says he didn't feel comfortable using his overdraft facility and that it shouldn't be used as an excuse for Halifax's error. He feels an offer of compensation of around £300 is a fairer amount. And so this complaint has been passed to me to decide on.

### **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've reached broadly the same conclusions as our investigator and I'll explain why below.

Mr B contacted Halifax as he says an international payment he tried to make wasn't appearing on his account. Halifax asked Mr B to make the payment again, but after making the second payment, Mr B says he received two messages saying both the transactions were successful.

Halifax acknowledge they made a mistake and provided Mr B with misinformation when they told him to make the second payment. They also apologised for the service he'd received from them when complaining. As compensation, Halifax offered around £140 to Mr B, which he declined. As it isn't in dispute that Halifax has made a mistake, I've gone on to consider whether this is a fair outcome.

The impact of Halifax's mistake was that Mr B believes he was short of funds during his holiday. He says it made his time away on holiday miserable as it was on his mind to get this issue and refund sorted with Halifax.

Halifax has provided me with Mr B's bank statements from around the time he made both international payments. I can see that as a result of the first payment going through successfully, it resulted in him being overdrawn on his account by about £45. Due to the second payment also being successfully processed, it resulted in him being further overdrawn in his account. I also note that whilst overdrawn, Mr B continued to spend on his account and was charged a daily interest fee, ranging from £0.12 to £0.41. This fee was charged until money was paid into Mr B's account which brought his balance out of his overdraft facility.

Mr B has said he wasn't comfortable using his overdraft facility as he was worried it might impact his credit rating. But I can see the first payment Mr B made resulted in him going into his overdraft and that he likely intended to do so. I can also see from the bank statements provided that Mr B has utilised the overdraft facilities on his account on other occasions as well. So, I don't think it follows that Mr B was uncomfortable using the overdraft facilities on his account.

Halifax's error was a one-off incident which was corrected within a fortnight. While I appreciate this was over a period when Mr B was on holiday and in need of his money, I think the impact on Mr B has been lessened somewhat with him having access to his overdraft funds and that he has used this facility in the past. I also think the impact on Mr B is lessened as he was already going to be overdrawn, due to the first international payment being taken, and due to his continued spending on his account.

Halifax has offered, among other things, to refund the interest charges Mr B incurred, as well as pay 8% gross interest per annum for the time Mr B was out of pocket (rounded up to £5).

I also note the service Mr B received while complaining to Halifax. I agree Mr B received poor service, but following Halifax's mistake, I think they acted reasonably in their attempt to put things right and I think their offer is fair in the circumstances.

### **Putting things right**

Given the circumstances, I think Halifax's offer of compensation and their apology is a fair resolution.

### **My final decision**

Bank of Scotland plc trading as Halifax has already made an offer to pay £139.78 to settle the complaint and I think this offer is fair in all the circumstances.

So my decision is that Bank of Scotland plc trading as Halifax should pay £139.78.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr B to accept or reject my decision before 15 March 2022.

Ronesh Amin  
**Ombudsman**