

The complaint

Mr M complains that Hargreaves Lansdown Asset Management Limited ("HLAM") provided incorrect pricing information for some shares on their platform.

What happened

Mr M held an online, execution only trading account with HLAM. At the end of May 2021 he began monitoring the price of some shares with the intention of selling when they hit a price of 161. The online price held at 160 and Mr M then became aware that the online pricing information was incorrect. Mr M says he reasonably relied upon the information HLAM provided and was disappointed to discover that the share price had actually risen to 173. Mr M says he has lost out as he would have sold the shares had HLAM presented the correct information.

HLAM accept that incorrect information displayed over a two-day period, which was down to an issue with the third-party provider. They rely upon disclaimers within the terms and conditions for the account and maintain that it was for Mr M to have monitored the share price independently. Further, Mr M would have received an accurate, live quote from the market had he placed an order to sell. HLAM say they make it clear that pricing data is only ever indicative.

Our investigator considered the complaint. He thought it was likely that HLAM knew there was an issue with the data feed, so they ought to have notified their clients, especially as the problem persisted for two days. It was reasonable for Mr M to rely on the data provided by HLAM and he was let down by not being informed of the pricing errors, especially as HLAM accepted they had the functionality to notify clients about issues with pricing. Our investigator thought that Mr M should be compensated for the inconvenience caused by being provided with incorrect information and recommended £150. However, on balance, our investigator did not accept that Mr M had demonstrated any financial loss. Despite the share price having hit 161 on several occasions since May 2021, Mr M had chosen not to sell at this original target price.

Mr M disagrees with the suggested redress. He maintains that he would have sold the shares at 173p and seeks the difference between the average cost of 161p and 173p. Mr M accepts that it was his decision not to sell at a later point in time.

As the parties do not agree, the matter has come to me 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.

Factually, there is little dispute in this complaint. HLAM concede that the pricing data was incorrect over the two-day period. I think it is reasonable to conclude that Mr M would likely have been considering the information provided. Given the duration of the error, I think it is more likely than not that Mr M was inconvenienced by the misleading information and I have

seen that he took time to contact HLAM to raise these concerns by both phone and email. HLAM also accept that Mr M was inconvenienced by what happened. On balance, I consider that it is fair and reasonable to compensate for this information shortcoming. I consider that £150 is fair compensation.

I appreciate that Mr M feels strongly that he has lost out financially because of errors by HLAM. I've thought carefully about this, but on balance, I am not persuaded that Mr M has established a financial loss. It's common ground that Mr M wasn't prevented from trading and the live quote option remained open at the time. I've also noted that Mr M hadn't set a limit order and HLAM had highlighted that independent checks should also be undertaken. Whilst, Mr M has given a consistent account that his target price at the time was 161, I'm mindful not to assess this matter with the benefit of hindsight. I've also considered that since May 2021 Mr M hasn't sold the shares and has purchased more, despite the price of the shares having met the target of 161 or above on several occasions. I'm sorry to disappoint Mr M, but it is also my view that he hasn't taken reasonable steps to mitigate any losses. Taking all these factors into account, I don't think it is fair and reasonable to ask HLAM to do anything more.

Putting things right

I consider that HLAM should pay £150 to Mr M to compensate for the inconvenience caused.

My final decision

For the reasons given, I am upholding this complaint in part. I direct Hargreaves Lansdown Asset Management Limited to pay Mr M £150.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr M to accept or reject my decision before 6 October 2022.

Sarah Tozzi
Ombudsman