

The complaint

Mrs O complains that The Royal Bank of Scotland Plc (“RBS”) gave incorrect information when transferring a large sum of money.

What happened

Mrs O contacted RBS to transfer £45,000 to a solicitors for a house purchase. She was advised to fax the instruction to make the CHAPS payment. To send the instruction by fax Mrs O was advised to download a fax app and input all the details.

Following this when Mrs O called RBS’s fraud department regarding another transaction of £20,000 she’d made digitally, she was told that RBS didn’t accept instructions by fax. Mrs O thought she had been scammed and was very distressed. For reasons that are unclear RBS couldn’t find the fax and Mrs O was left feeling lost as had no idea who had it with all her personal details. Mrs O took a day off work and visited an RBS branch where she successfully made the £45,000 CHAPS payment.

RBS acknowledged that it had given Mrs O incorrect information and that it did accept instructions by fax. Mrs O complained and RBS offered her £75 compensation.

Mrs O was dis-satisfied with this and brought her complaint to this service. One of our adjudicators looked into Mrs O’s concerns and reached the conclusion that RBS had failed to manage the stress caused to Mrs O by giving her incorrect advice. They thought RBS should pay a further £75 compensation for the stress this caused to Mrs O.

RBS has agreed to our adjudicators recommendation but Mrs O would like more compensation for the worry its error caused her and has asked for an ombudsman’s decision.

What I’ve decided – and why

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Having considered everything provided, I’ve decided what RBS has already agreed to do is a fair way to put things right for Mrs N’s complaint.

My role is to look at the problems Mrs N has experienced and see if RBS has done anything wrong. If it has, I would seek – if possible - to put Mrs N back in the position they would’ve been in if the mistakes hadn’t happened. And I may award modest compensation that I think is fair and reasonable.

Both RBS and Mrs O have confirmed the transaction has successfully completed and I've not been told that the delay in the transaction taking place has caused any financial loss. So the question I have to ask is whether the total amount offered of £150 compensation for the distress and inconvenience caused by RBS providing incorrect advice is a fair and reasonable way to settle Mrs O's complaint.

And I think it is. As I'm sure Mrs O is aware mistakes do happen. In Mrs O's case the mistake didn't lead to any financial loss and was over the course of a day. However, during this time Mrs O was understandably very worried she had been scammed out of a large sum of money.

It was during a phone call between Mrs O and an RBS advisor when Mrs O was misadvised and started to think she had been scammed. I've listened to the recording of the call and it is very clear to me that the mis information provided by RBS was the reason Mrs O thought she had been scammed and that from this point Mrs O was undoubtedly very concerned – and I think the advisor did little to alleviate her concerns. So, I think it is for this Mrs O should be compensated for.

Mrs O says she had to take a day off work in order to sort out the payments. Although this hasn't specifically resulted in a financial loss for Mrs O I have factored this in when assessing what the appropriate award should be overall for the distress and inconvenience caused. And I'm in agreement with our adjudicator here that a further £75 payment (on top of the £75 already offered) in recognition of the distress and inconvenience caused by RBS's advisor providing incorrect information is it appropriate compensation.

As RBS has already agreed to pay this, I consider this a fair and reasonable way to settle Mrs O's complaint and don't require RBS to do anything more.

My final decision

For the reasons I've explained I direct The Royal Bank of Scotland to pay Mrs O compensation of £150.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs O to accept or reject my decision before 3 August 2022.

Caroline Davies
Ombudsman