

The complaint

Mrs M complains about problems with payments through her HSBC UK Bank plc (HSBC) account. She doesn't feel the compensation HSBC has offered is fair as she believes she has lost £1,120.71

What happened

The details of this complaint are well known so I won't repeat them again here instead I will focus on giving the reasons for my 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 reached the following conclusions:-

- I have seen Mrs M's account statements .A payment towards her credit card for £1,120.71 made on 1 December 2020 was returned.. HSBC explained it needed to carry out some security checks. I don't think that was unreasonable as those checks are to protect the consumer and the bank. However, it acknowledges, having completed these checks, it didn't process the payment. It apologised and offered £300 compensation for the inconvenience. But I note Mrs M has not accepted this payment
- The statements show Mrs M then made a payment of £2,077.07 on 28 January 2021 to cover the returned payment in December and I assume the payment then due in January. However, a third payment for £1,120.71 was made on 9 February 2021 which Mrs M says she didn't authorise.
- It's very difficult when there is a disagreement as to what has happened. HSBC says Mrs M wanted to make the third payment but didn't want to go into the branch due to COVID concerns. Mrs M disputes this saying she had already visited the branch twice. What's not in dispute is that two members of HSBC staff visited Mrs M at home to get her signature on a form. It's unfortunate that, due to a branch closure, it's not been possible to locate that form. HSBC spoke to one of the staff involved who said the reason for the signature was to get Mrs M's authority to make the payment. I think it unlikely HSBC would have made a payment on Mrs M's behalf unless it believed this is what she wanted
- I do appreciate Mrs M's concern about the third payment, but the money isn't 'lost '. As I understand this payment did reach the credit card provider. So, she should be able to get a refund from that provider. However, I do appreciate that has left Mrs M without those funds and with the inconvenience of seeking a refund. But I don't feel I have any evidence to conclude that the third payment was made in error by HSBC.

- Finally, Mrs M has told us that she doesn't feel HSBC treated her fairly for example blaming her for a problem with her initial cheque. I have no evidence of this. I do think HSBC's investigation has been reasonable , it accepted it made a mistake in not processing her cheque once it completed its security checks and offered , in my view, an appropriate level of compensation for the distress and inconvenience caused.

My final decision

My final decision is that I uphold this complaint

In full and final settlement HSBC UK plc should pay Mrs M the £300 compensation it has already offered.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs M to accept or reject my decision before 13 September 2022.

Bridget Makins
Ombudsman