

## **The complaint**

Mr M is unhappy with the service he received from HSBC UK Bank Plc surrounding his request for a replacement debit card.

## **What happened**

Mr M noticed that the contactless payment feature on his HSBC debit card was no longer working, so he contacted HSBC and requested a replacement card. However, the replacement debit card never arrived, and when Mr M contacted HSBC about the card he was told that there had been a problem with the address HSBC held for him which meant that Mr M would need to collect the replacement card from a HSBC branch. Mr M wasn't happy about this, so he raised a complaint.

HSBC looked at Mr M's complaint. They confirmed that an issue with how Mr M's address had been recorded on their systems meant the replacement debit card couldn't be posted and so had to be collected from a HSBC branch. HSBC apologised to Mr M for this and offered to pay £400 compensation to him for any trouble and upset he may have incurred. Mr M wasn't satisfied with HSBC's response, so he referred his complaint to this service.

One of our investigators looked at this complaint. During their investigation, HSBC reiterated their position and explained that they felt the agent who had initially dealt with Mr M's complaint had offered a higher compensation amount that was fair or reasonable. So, they reduced their offer of compensation to Mr M from £400 to £100.

Our investigator didn't feel that HSBC had done much wrong in how they'd managed this situation, and they felt HSBC's amended offer of £100 compensation was a fair amount in regard to Mr M being asked to collect the debit card from HSBC's branch. Mr M continued to be dissatisfied, so the matter was escalated 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.

HSBC have confirmed that Mr M's address wasn't fully complete on their systems, being held as the house number, street name, and postcode only. And HSBC have further confirmed that, while this 'short-form' address was sufficient for them to issue monthly account statements and other correspondence to that address, it wasn't enough to satisfy the more stringent requirements of the separate HSBC system that dealt with replacement debit card issuances, and that therefore it was for this reason – that Mr M's full address wasn't held with HSBC – that Mr M's requested replacement debit card wasn't delivered to his address as he would have liked.

HSBC therefore ordered Mr M's replacement debit card to one of the nearest HSBC branches to Mr M's address, in line with their policies, and notified Mr M about this and the need for him to collect the replacement card from that branch accordingly. And while Mr M did then contact HSBC and provided his full address to them, HSBC's policies also meant

that HSBC weren't willing to send the replacement card to Mr M's updated address from the branch it had been ordered to, and that Mr M was still required to collect it from the branch.

HSBC are entitled to hold the policies that they do here. But it seems evident that Mr M was inconvenienced by being asked to collect the card from HSBC's branch, which was about a three-mile walk or a twenty-minute car journey from Mr M's address. And I note that HSBC appear to have accepted this point and offered Mr M compensation of £100 as a result.

However, Mr M has explained to this service that he refused to collect the debit card from HSBC's branch on principle, and he's further explained that he feels the considerable inconvenience and upset his not having a contactless debit card has caused him since that time should merit a compensation payment to him from HSBC of £25,000.

I find it difficult to understand Mr M's position here, and while I accept that he has incurred an ongoing detriment resultant from his not having a contactless debit card, I feel that Mr M himself should bear the responsibility for this, given that the option for him to collect the replacement debit card from HSBC's branch was always available to him, and that he refused to take that option. And I find Mr M's position here to be especially counter-intuitive, given that Mr M has taken great pains to explain to this service exactly how much he needed a contactless debit card – which he then refused to pick up from HSBC's branch.

Ultimately, I feel that HSBC should fairly be asked to compensate Mr M for the inconvenience he would have incurred had he picked up the replacement debit card from HSBC's branch as he was asked to. And I feel the £100 compensation amount already offered by HSBC does represent a fair and reasonable level of compensation for this point – for Mr M being asked to visit HSBC's branch to pick up the replacement card as he was.

Additionally, as explained, I don't feel that HSBC should be fairly held accountable for any further inconvenience or upset that Mr M experienced as a result of him refusing to pick up the debit card from HSBC's branch, which I feel he reasonably could and should have done.

It's my understanding that because Mr M didn't pick up the replacement debit card from HSBC's branch in a reasonable time that the replacement card has now been destroyed and that Mr M will need to order another replacement card should he still require one. This seems reasonable to me, and I encourage Mr M to follow the steps required of him by HSBC if he continues to want a replacement debit card.

All of which means that, while I will technically be upholding this complaint in Mr M's favour, I'll only be doing so in order to formally require – should Mr M accept the decision that I've issued here – HSBC to pay the £100 compensation to Mr M that they've already offered, and I won't be recording any adverse outcome against HSBC in regard to this complaint.

### **Putting things right**

HSBC must make a payment of £100 to Mr M.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that I uphold this complaint against HSBC UK Bank Plc on the basis explained above.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr M to accept or reject my decision before 31 January 2023.

Paul Cooper  
**Ombudsman**