

The complaint

Mr J complains that Wise Payments Limited, trading as Wise, unfairly closed his account.

What happened

The background to this complaint is well known to both parties, so I won't repeat everything here. Rather, I'll summarise the key points:

- Wise closed Mr J's account after he failed some of its internal checks – particularly around proof of income.
- Mr J complained to Wise in February 2023. He said, in summary, that he'd provided everything Wise should need to verify his income and that its decision to close his account was unreasonable.
- In response, Wise told Mr J that it had decided to keep his account closed. It said it couldn't provide him with a specific reason but, nonetheless, its terms and conditions permitted such action.
- Mr J remained unhappy, so he contacted our Service for an independent review. He said Wise had caused him significant inconvenience.
- An Investigator here looked at what had happened and, ultimately, she upheld the complaint. She thought Wise had given Mr J unclear and confusing information about how its process worked. Our Investigator also noted that Wise had since said Mr J's account could have been reactivated, had all the information he provided been looked at together. But this hadn't happened.
- Overall, our Investigator thought Mr J had been caused inconvenience. So, she asked Wise to pay £150 compensation.
- Wise accepted our Investigator's view, as did Mr J. However, since Wise accepted the findings on 30 June, no compensation has been paid – despite our Investigator chasing things several times.
- Therefore, Mr J's complaint has now been passed to me – as our Investigator said that it would – to make a final decision, so Mr J can take further action to enforce this decision if necessary.

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.

Broadly speaking, as far as the merits of the complaint itself are concerned, there's nothing left in dispute here. From what I've seen, given its acceptance of our Investigator's view of

the complaint, Wise agrees that it could've handled things better.

For the avoidance of doubt, I agree with our Investigator. I think Wise could've been more specific with Mr J when explaining its process. I also think that lack of clarity ultimately led to Mr J's account being closed when, if things had been clearer, he likely would've followed the steps Wise needed him to, so as to verify his income.

Ultimately, I'm satisfied that Mr J did provide the information Wise required – Wise just didn't make it clear to him *how* he should best do that.

Overall, then, I think Wise has caused Mr J some inconvenience. And to that end; I find the £150 recommended by our Investigator to be a reasonable amount of compensation in the circumstances.

Since Wise accepted our Investigator's view of the complaint neither Mr J, nor our Service, have received any confirmation – or, for that matter, any response or indication at all – that the compensation agreed upon has been paid. So, to put things right, unless Wise can show evidence of having already done so prior to the date of this decision, I instruct it to pay Mr J £150 to recognise the inconvenience it caused him.

My final decision

My final decision is that I uphold Mr J's complaint. I now require Wise Payments Limited, trading as Wise, to pay Mr J £150 compensation – unless it can show it has already done so.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr J to accept or reject my decision before 4 October 2023.

Simon Louth
Ombudsman