

## The complaint

Mr I complains that an international transfer made to his account from a family member on 26 May 2023 didn't arrive for an extended period. He says this has caused him stress, reputational issues and financial costs.

## What happened

Mr I was sent money through an international transfer from a family member. He says that he didn't receive the money and the family member chased this and was told that the money was with Starling Bank's correspondence bank. He had to chase for an update and says the money wasn't received until 20 June 2023. Mr I says the delay in the money arriving resulted in charges for the late payment of his rent and caused him stress and reputational issues.

Starling Bank says that Mr I contacted it on 28 May to ask about an international payment and he was told these normally take between one and five days to credit an account. Mr I then contacted Starling Bank several times to try to locate the money and provided the information needed to trace the payment. Starling Bank said that it told Mr I the money was with its intermediary bank and checks were being completed. A complaint was raised due to the time being taken to release the money.

Starling Bank then contacted Mr I on 20 June to say the money had received it. It requested some additional information from Mr I which he provided, and the money was released to his account. Starling Bank upheld Mr I's complaint and paid him £250 compensation due to the delays in the money being released. It said if Mr I provided evidence of other costs he had incurred it could consider these.

Our investigator didn't think that Starling Bank had provided the service it should have done. But she noted it had apologised for the delays in Mr I receiving the money and had paid him £250 compensation which she thought was reasonable.

Mr I didn't agree with our investigator's view. He didn't think the compensation awarded was enough given the distress he had been caused and the costs he had incurred.

## *My provisional conclusions*

I issued a provisional decision on this complaint. My findings are set out below.

*Starling Bank has accepted that it didn't provide the service it should have. It has explained that the money was held with its intermediary bank for checks and it only received the money on 19 June 2023. It then contacted Mr I for some further information and the money was moved to Mr I's account on 20 June 2023.*

*As the money has now been transferred to Mr I the outstanding issue relates to the amount of compensation that should be paid to reflect the distress and inconvenience that Mr I was caused. Starling Bank has accepted that the transfer took an unacceptable length of time and paid Mr I £250 for the distress and inconvenience caused.*

*I assess each case based on its individual merits. In this case I have considered Mr I's testimony and taking into account the impact he has explained the delay in receiving the funds has had on him I think it reasonable that additional compensation is paid.*

*I note that Starling Bank said it would consider any evidence of further costs Mr I was able to provide and I find this reasonable. Unfortunately, Mr I hasn't been able to provide evidence of the additional costs he says he incurred due to his rent being late and needing to borrow money. I do however note the reference on the transfer of funds was for living costs which would support Mr I's comment about needing to find money to pay his rent and general expenses while the money wasn't available to him. Mr I has also explained the mental stress this issue caused him and has provided a copy of medication he was prescribed in the period of the money being delayed.*

*Given the above, while I do not have evidence of specific costs Mr I incurred as a result of the delay, I accept this issue caused him a lot of stress. Mr I was chasing the payment during the delay period and provided evidence of the banking transaction to assist in tracking the payment. This further supports his testimony of the importance of the money to him and the stress caused by its delay.*

*I note Mr I's comment about how much compensation he feels he should be paid, but I have to consider that the banks are required to undertake checks and that when Starling Bank received the money from its intermediary bank it acted quickly to get the money transferred to Mr I.*

*Taking all of the above into account, I think Startling Bank should pay Mr I a further £250 compensation (bringing total compensation to £500) to reflect the upset and stress he was caused by the delay in receiving his money through the international transfer.*

*I accept this isn't the amount Mr I wants but taking everything into account, and without further evidence of the costs he incurred, I think this is a fair resolution to this complaint.*

Starling Bank accepted my provisional decision. Mr I didn't agree that the additional compensation recommended was enough. He said his complaint was never primarily about his financial loss but all of the non-financial damage particularly to his mental state and the impact this had on his family. He said the delay was unacceptable and avoidable.

## **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.

As I said in my provisional decision, I am sorry to hear of the experience Mr I has had when his family member made an international transfer to his account. Startling Bank has said the transfer should have taken between one and five days but in the case of Mr I's transfer he didn't receive the money until almost a month after the transfer was made.

My role isn't to punish Starling Bank but instead to try to put Mr I back in the position he would have been had the issue (in this case the delay) not occurred. Mr I did receive his money and so he is back in the position he should be but this was after a substantial delay.

I understand that the delay didn't just result in financial costs, and I have considered the impact the delay had on Mr I and I have taken into account his testimony in regard to the effect it had on his mental health and the impact this had on his family. I can see Mr I made several calls and I can hear on these that he is stressed by the delay and that he explains the impact including costs that the delay is having. I have taken this into account and have

also considered the actions Starling Bank took in chasing the money and that once it was received that this was transferred to Mr I.

Based on this, while I understand that Mr I will not be happy with my decision, I find that an additional £250 compensation is a reasonable resolution to this complaint.

### **Putting things right**

Starling Bank Limited should pay Mr I an additional £250 compensation to reflect the distress he was caused by the delay in receiving his money.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that Starling Bank Limited should take the actions set out above in resolution of this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr I to accept or reject my decision before 30 October 2023.

Jane Archer  
**Ombudsman**