

The complaint

Mr C says that he has been given incorrect information by MFM Investment Ltd ('MFM') that led him to believe that he had contributed to his investment account when he hadn't done this. He said he spent a large amount of time trying to put this right.

What happened

Mr C opened a M&G&me General Investment Account on 31 May 2023, MFM is responsible for this account. This had a promotional offer whereby if Mr C made a payment of £500 into it before 23 June 2023 he would receive a £100 bonus. I understand that Mr C attempted to transfer £500 from his bank account to the investment account shortly after opening it.

On 19 June 2023 MFM contacted Mr C and informed him that he had not contributed to his account. Mr C says he went online and checked his account and he saw a 'caption' which said *'Thanks for making your manual bank transfer. Funds should arrive in your account with 2 – 3 days'*.

At this point Mr C says he became concerned that he would not receive the promotional bonus, so he complained to MFM.

On 21 June 2023 MFM contacted Mr C and informed him that it hadn't received a payment into his new investment account. And it asked if Mr C could provide confirmation from his bank account that it had been processed.

MFM went on to explain that the information above in the 'caption' was shown to Mr C because there is a screen on its website that provides information about how to make a bank transfer (and other methods of payment) into the account. On this page there is a section that asked Mr C if he had made a transfer and he indicated that he had. So, the information about what happens next was displayed.

It said that this information was correct, given that Mr C had indicated that he had made a transfer into the account. And it hadn't told him at any point that it would take any money automatically, for example, by direct debit.

MFM went on to respond to Mr C's complaints. It said that it wasn't responsible for the transfer not going through and it didn't think the information it had provided was incorrect. It did think it's customer service could have been better at times, so it offered to honour the £100 bonus payment and waive a years' worth of account management fees as a goodwill gesture.

Mr C didn't accept this and brought his complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service. One of our Investigators considered the complaint but didn't uphold it. She said that:

- Mr C didn't follow the procedures he should have done to transfer money into his investment. Mr C has accepted that it's likely he made an error when he was trying to transfer this money.

- Mr C was provided information that his bank transfer would be credited in 2 to 3 days, but this was because he had indicated that he had made a bank transfer and so this wasn't misleading.
- Given all of the above, she thought the steps MFM had already taken to put things right were reasonable.

Mr C still thought that the information he had been supplied with was misleading. He didn't think it was right that he was told that funds would arrive in the account within 2 to 3 days. He thought that the information he had received about this was poor and he would have expected more robust notifications if there were any problems, such as a message saying the initial payment had failed. In this way the customer would not need to be worried about making a double payment, as he was.

Our Investigator didn't change their opinion about the complaint. It has now been passed to me to issue my 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.

Mr C has essentially said that the information that MFM provided was misleading. And this led to him not being able to make a payment into his investment account. He says he was unable to do this as it was unclear to him if he had already made a payment to the account, and he didn't want to make two payments in case he needed access to some of his money.

In order to uphold this complaint, it needs to be established that MFM did mislead Mr C. And that this led him to be unsure if a payment he thought he had made would reach the investment in time to secure the bonus. Which in turn would have led to Mr C being unclear if he still needed to make a payment.

Mr C was making the payment himself using a bank transfer. As far as I can see, MFM didn't have any involvement in this process in the same way it would with, for example, a direct debit. And Mr C now says it's likely that he may have made an error when he made this payment. So, it wouldn't be fair to say that MFM was responsible for the first payment that Mr C tried to make not reaching the investment account.

The crux of this complaint is about the information MFM provided when this first payment wasn't received by MFM.

I've looked at the website information that both Mr C and MFM have provided. This does say that the payment Mr C had made would be allocated to his account within 2 to 3 days. But this information was provided when Mr C said that he had made a transfer. And so, it is not misleading within the context of the information that Mr C had provided himself. I don't see why MFM couldn't provide information about the next steps for a payment when a consumer has indicated they have made a payment.

Mr C thinks that MFM should have been able to provide more information on the status of his payment, such as warning him that a payment had failed. But I don't see how it could have done this. It had informed him that it hadn't received a payment. It wouldn't be aware of the status of any payments Mr C was trying to make, this kind of information would be held by his bank or building society. I would have thought this organisation would be best placed to let Mr C know if a payment had failed or was pending. And MFM did suggest that Mr C contact his bank about this, which I think was the right thing to do, given the circumstances

here. And he could have avoided any uncertainty he had about making a payment twice by doing this.

Given all of the above, I don't think that MFM has maladministered any payments that Mr C was trying to make. And I don't think the information it provided was misleading.

MFM has paid Mr C the £100 bonus and will refund a years' worth of management fees. I understand it has already put these things in place. I think this is reasonable for what it says was some poor customer service in dealing with Mr C's complaint. I won't be asking MFM to do anything more here.

My final decision

For the reasons set out above, I don't uphold Mr C's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr C to accept or reject my decision before 20 March 2024.

Andy Burlinson
Ombudsman