

## The complaint

Mr D is unhappy with the amount of time HSBC UK Bank Plc's took to send him statements from his currency bank account.

## What happened

Mr D needed to get bank statements for a mortgage advisor. So, Mr D got in contact with HSBC. Mr D said he was initially given the impression that it would get him the statements he needed within 10 days. But the statements didn't arrive. Mr D wasn't happy with the lack of service and delays he encountered.

HSBC said because there hadn't been transactions on Mr D's account it wasn't able to produce a statement. It said this type of account didn't generate statements without transactions. HSBC said this was its policy for this particular product. In the end it had to get a different department to issue the statements Mr D required and it took roughly six weeks to get this done. In view of the delays, it offered £50 compensation. Mr D didn't accept this and brought his complaint to this service.

Our investigator upheld the complaint. She said she felt HSBC had acted in line with the account terms and conditions. But she didn't think HSBC had done things quickly enough. Our investigator accepted HSBC had produced the statements by taking action outside of its normal procedures but said HSBC should pay an additional £50 in compensation for the impact on Mr D.

HSBC accepted this but Mr D didn't. Mr D said the compensation wasn't proportionate to the consequences that he suffered. He asked for his complaint to be passed 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.

Mr D was understandably unhappy that he was expecting to get his statements quickly and was then told it would be within 10 days. But matters got worse when that didn't happen. Mr D then spent time and effort chasing the bank to get the situation resolved. Mr D referred to BCOBS regulations he said HSBC had breached and the environmental impact of printing paper statements. Mr D made the request on 28 February but didn't get the statements until 14 April.

HSBC initially said *"statements are not issued for accounts that do not have transactions on them, and that is the case with your account. You are able to see your account and balance online but currently statements for HCA accounts are not available online. I have sent the request to get the statements sent to you by post and this will take up to 10 working days to arrive."*

Later HSBC said *"I have chased up your request and the team have advised that, as there was no transaction on the account for more than a year, there is nothing to print out. I do appreciate your reference to the FCA BCOBS 4.2 'Statements of account', but this relates to accounts that have transactions to report; which in your case it does not."*

This email confirmed details of Mr D's account and the current balance.

HSBC were upsetting Mr D with the responses and delays at this point and Mr D continued to refer to BCOBS and Consumer Duty.

HSBC said it sent feedback internally about what had happened in Mr D's case. It also said *"HSBC is highly regulated and we comply with the FCA's rules and regulations. The HCA account does not generate a statement if there are no transactions made on the account."* *"There is no restriction on the provision of bank statements: This is a bank policy for this product. So, if there is no transaction on the account, the system would not generate a statement. This would mean a copy cannot be printed."*

In conclusion HSBC said *"HCA is the only account that we don't have the statements available on the digital platform. However, we have a new currency account called Global Money which works just like the HCA, but have the option to view your balance, transactions and statements on the digital platforms."*

Because of the issues at this point HSBC offered Mr D £50 compensation.

Mr D has mentioned the wider implications of HSBC not providing statements, but I can only deal specifically with the circumstances of his complaint. If Mr D wishes to take the wider point further, he would need to contact the regulator The Financial Conduct Authority.

I need to consider if HSBC acted fairly and reasonably in this case.

It is accepted that Mr D's account had no transactions on it at the point when he needed to get statements. The account terms and conditions said HSBC would *"send statements each month there's been a payment out of [the] account since the last statement."* So, based on these terms and conditions I don't think HSBC acted unfairly when it didn't immediately produce an account statement for Mr D.

But Mr D did make a perfectly reasonable request when he asked for a statement. And I wouldn't expect Mr D to be fully aware of the terms and conditions that apply to the account. However, I would expect HSBC staff to be fully aware of the terms and conditions that apply. So, I do think HSBC should have been able to update and communicate these details to Mr D when he first made the request. Instead, Mr D was under the impression he was going to get his statements with limited fuss.

When this didn't happen Mr D did end up sending emails and having telephone conversations with HSBC. I can understand that Mr D was trying to resolve something that any customer would consider to be easy for HSBC to do. So, I don't think there's any doubt HSBC should have explained to Mr D much earlier what problems it was going to encounter and it should have found a way to deal with his simple request much quicker too.

Mr D doesn't feel the compensation offered is proportionate and he said he hasn't had any compensation yet from HSBC anyway. Mr D referred to the undue inconvenience and stress. He mentioned his hourly rate, writing emails and the time he spent on the telephone.

The bank said it should normally have sent the statements in 10 days but in the end it had to follow a different procedure and it took roughly six weeks. So, I don't think HSBC's offer of

£50 was reasonable. I've seen Mr D's emails and details of his efforts to resolve the issue. Based on these details I think HSBC should pay Mr D a total of £100 for the distress and inconvenience caused by the delay. HSBC should arrange to pay this immediately.

### **Putting things right**

Pay Mr D £100 compensation for the distress and inconvenience caused.

### **My final decision**

I uphold this complaint.

I require HSBC UK Bank Plc to:

Pay Mr D £100 compensation for the distress and inconvenience it caused.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr D to accept or reject my decision before 8 February 2024.

John Quinlan  
**Ombudsman**