

The complaint

Mrs J complains about Skipton Building Society's system which she considers to have misled her and caused financial losses.

What happened

With the tax year running from 6 April to 5 April, for the year 2021/22, Mrs J opened a fixed rate ISA account with Skipton and made two £10,000 payments into this account, one on 4 April 2022 and the other on 5 April 2022.

However, having opened another ISA with another provider and deposited an additional £20,000 for the year 2022/23, in February 2023 she discovered that Skipton had credited her £10,000 on 6 April 2022 rather than 5 April 2022.

Mrs J was shocked and distressed at this discovery and has an on-line screen print showing that she made the payment on 5 April 2022 and not 6 April 2022. As this also caused her financial losses, including a penalty fee, she complained to Skipton.

However, Skipton said they hadn't made a mistake. They explained that her £10,000 payment on 5 April 2022 had been made too late in the day and that she should've been aware of this.

As Mrs J believes she has been misled by Skipton and the date on the on-line statement differs to the paper statement, she complained to our service. Mrs J also complained about Skipton's complaint handling staff as she feels they lacked experience, made an assumption and caused a delay.

However, our investigator didn't uphold Mrs J's complaints and, as she remains dissatisfied, this case has been referred to me to look at.

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.

Having done so, I'm not upholding this complaint and I'll explain why.

Regarding Mrs J's desire for Skipton to alter its systems (to synchronise dates), processes (postal statements for on-line accounts) and product terms and conditions, this isn't something our service can request or require. I say this because we aren't the regulator of the financial services.

Also, there are rules (known as DISP Rules) laid down by the Financial Conduct Authority (the regulator) which means complaint handling is not a regulated activity. So, specific complaints about Skipton's complaint handling staff and their processes can't be considered by our service.

Although I can understand Mrs J's disappointment and feeling that she was misled by Skipton's on-line transaction date, for the following reasons I don't consider this to be the case:

- I've seen the homepage of Skipton's website, which Mrs J would've gone through to open the account on 4 April 2022, and this:
 - Highlighted an important *'If you're paying into an ISA'* message.
 - Message said that payments received after 5pm on 5 April 2022 *'may not be processed in time and might count towards your ISA allowance for 2022/23'*. Also, it gave times for different payment types. In addition, this was an on-line account and this Skipton *'Tax Year End – ISA Payment Deadlines'* information was also detailed both in their branches and on their website.
- Although I recognise it wasn't the time Mrs J sent the 5 April 2022 payment, I've seen information which shows that Skipton received her payment more than 3 hours after the above 5pm closure and cut off time.
- Regarding the receipt of payments Skipton are not a bank and their terms and conditions say payments make take 2 days to reach the account. Also, their website says the following about faster payments:

'Skipton is part of the Faster Payments network which means payments from most UK banks will be applied to your account within 2 hours of the payment being sent, regardless of the day or time they have arrived. For Faster Payments sent on a weekend, bank holiday or after the evening cut-off (typically 6:00 pm) we won't receive the funds until the next working day. This means that, even though the money might show in your Skipton account, it will not start to earn interest until the next working day. You should check with your provider what their cut-off time is for sending Faster Payments.'

So, I don't consider the date on Skipton's screen page, which was the actual processing date, to have been incorrect. And, although I can understand that this may have been missed and caused confusion, I think Skipton's messaging for customers making payments to have been reasonable.

Also, as Mrs J was making a self-service account payment so close to the deadline, I think she should've either looked at the timeframe messages for both making and receiving payments or checked with Skipton. Furthermore, whilst I appreciate Mrs J would have liked to have seen a paper statement, I'm satisfied this was an on-line self-service account and although the customer profile wasn't viewed on 6 April it enabled her to view her ISA allowance.

I also looked at Skipton's reasons for charging Mrs J a fee when she subsequently transferred her funds to another account. However, as I'm not persuaded that Skipton made an error and the new account attracted a higher interest rate, I consider the fee to be fair and reasonable.

So, although I recognise Mrs J's disappointment and frustration here, having considered the above and all the information on file I'm not upholding this complaint.

My final decision

My final decision is that I'm not upholding this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs J to accept or

reject my decision before 9 March 2024.

Paul Douglas
Ombudsman