

The complaint

Mr M complains that Santander UK Plc haven't provided him with the assistance he needed after he made a mistake transferring money from his Santander account.

What happened

On 9 August 2023, Mr M made a transfer from his Santander account for £800. He meant to send the money to his account with another bank but made a mistake inputting the details. He contacted Santander and was told that once the transfer had been confirmed it couldn't be stopped. Mr M contacted his other bank and said it wasn't helpful.

Santander issued a final response letter dated 4 October 2023. It said that Mr M contacted it on 10 August about a payment he had made from his Santander account saying that he had input the incorrect account details. Santander raised a payment recovery on a best endeavours basis which meant there was no guarantee the payment would be returned. Mr M was told this could take up to 20 working days. Mr M contacted Santander on 21 August and was again told the process would take 20 working days. Mr M then called to request the Faster Payment ID (FPID) for the outgoing payment. Santander said this would only be provided if the funds couldn't be located. Mr M explained why he wanted the FPID, but the call was then disconnected and Mr M wasn't called back. Santander said that Mr M then called several times and the FPID was eventually provided. Santander apologised for the poor customer journey Mr m experienced and that it didn't provide the FPID sooner. Because of this it paid him £150. Regarding Mr M's money transfer, it said it didn't get a response from the beneficiary bank and so his request was closed.

Mr M wasn't satisfied with the £150 paid by Santander and referred his complaint to his service. He wants Santander to reclaim the money from the other bank.

Our investigator didn't uphold this complaint. She was satisfied that Santander tried to recall the payment, but this was unsuccessful. She thought that the payment of £150 for the distress and inconvenience caused by the poor customer service was reasonable.

Mr M didn't accept our investigator's view. He said he hadn't been told what his options are to recover his money and while he made a mistake with inputting the details other shouldn't be able to take advantage of this. He said Santander should have actively chased the money and said that the early hours/days of the claim are critical, and Santander didn't provide him with the information he needed. He also said that Santander closed his complaint without him agreeing to the compensation. He said he needed a letter from Santander empowering him to progress his claim with the beneficiary bank.

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.

I understand how upsetting this issue must be for Mr M as the £800 he thought he was paying into another of his accounts hasn't been recovered. But for me to uphold this complaint I would need to be satisfied that Santander had done something wrong or treated Mr M unfairly.

Mr M made a transfer on 9 August 2023. On 10 August 2023 he called Santander as he said the money was taking longer than usual to arrive into his other account. It was identified that Mr M had entered incorrect account details for the transfer. I understand Mr M's comments that anyone can make a mistake and that others shouldn't benefit from this, but I also have to note that the mistake was made by him and not Santander. Unfortunately, as the transfer had been confirmed it couldn't be stopped at that point.

When money has been transferred to an incorrect account, we expect the sending bank to assist the customer in recovering the money. Santander explained to Mr M that it would raise a payment recovery request but that this was on a best endeavours basis and that the recovery of the money wasn't guaranteed. This is the action we would expect to be taken in this situation and I can see that the payment recovery was raised on 10 August 2023.

Mr M was told that it could take up to 20 working days to get an outcome. So, while I can see he chased an outcome in advance of this I do not find Santander was wrong to explain the timeframes involved. Unfortunately, the money wasn't recovered through the payment recovery process and Santander has explained that a response wasn't received from the beneficiary bank. While this is upsetting for Mr M, as Santander took the action we would expect and there is nothing to show that the issue arose through a Santander error, I cannot say that Santander has done anything wrong or treated Mr M unfairly. Because of this I do not uphold this part of Mr M's complaint.

Santander has accepted that it didn't provide the service it should have and paid Mr M £150 because of this. I have considered whether the compensation provided for the upset and inconvenience caused by the issues Mr M experienced is reasonable.

While I note Mr M's comment about needing information in the early stages of a claim, I do not find that I can say that had he received the FPID sooner this would have changed the outcome. I also accept that Santander did raise the payment recovery request as soon as the issue with the incorrect account details was identified. Therefore I have only considered the need for compensation to reflect the distress and inconvenience Mr M was caused by the service issues such as not receiving a call back and needing to chase for the FPID. And, in this case, I find that the £150 that has been paid is reasonable. I note Mr M's comment about his complaint being closed without him agreeing to the compensation, but I find it reasonable that Santander took action to compensate Mr M for the service issues and Mr M was given the option to refer his complaint to this service if he wasn't happy with the outcome, which he did.

Mr M wants Santander to assist him with the recovery of his money. Santander has said that if Mr M wants it to contact the beneficiary bank to get the beneficiary details, then it would need this in writing. If Mr M wishes to do this, then he should contact Santander directly.

My final decision

My final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr M to accept or reject my decision before 26 March 2024.

Jane Archer
Ombudsman