

The complaint

Mr S complains about issues he had paying in cheques to his bank account with Bank of Scotland plc trading as Halifax ("Halifax").

What happened

The details of this complaint are well known to both parties, so I won't repeat them again here. The facts are not in dispute, so I'll focus on giving the reasons for my 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.

Having done so, I agree with the conclusions reached by the Investigator for these reasons:

- I'm satisfied the original error for one of the cheques not being processed was due to Mr S scanning the cheque twice on his app, and that then meant it was rejected, and he needed to visit the branch. This is inline with Halifax's published policy.
- The second cheque was rejected as it had a name mismatch. Neither party disputes this point.
- The third cheque and the amount still outstanding was rejected originally, as Halifax said its system couldn't make out the date. Mr S had also scanned that one twice, so it was also being picked up by Halifax's systems as a duplicate.
- Mr S presented two of the cheques that failed at the branch and only one was paid into his account. Mr S was given limited information in the branch to explain why one of the cheques again wasn't paid and one was. Halifax have admitted its service could've been better and offered to compensate Mr S for this. Halifax has also told our service that the system failed to recognise the successfully processed cheque as a duplicate and it should've in fact been rejected along with the now outstanding amount.
- Halifax paid Mr S £40 compensation for the inconvenience and refunded his daily overdraft charges. Our investigator recommended Halifax increase the compensation amount to £150, for the level of inconvenience and confusion caused. Halifax agreed with the recommendation.
- Having considered that there were errors made by both parties, and the confusion Halifax's system caused when it then went on to accept one of the previously rejected cheques and not the other, I'm satisfied £150 compensates Mr S fairly in the circumstances of this complaint.
- Both represented cheques should've been rejected by Halifax's system, but one did go through as paid. So, although Mr S is unhappy he still has to get the last cheque

reissued by the third party company, he would've always needed to do this after he scanned it twice. So, the compensation I'm recommending Halifax pay, is for the poor customer service when he attended the branch.

- Our investigator also asked Halifax to issue a letter to Mr S to show the cheque was never cashed. This has been done and sent on to Mr S who has confirmed he received it.
- I'm satisfied any delays Mr S is now suffering from is due to the third-party company, and not the actions of Halifax. Halifax have done what was required of them to fix the problem, and a complaint about any delays should now be directed back to the business issuing the cheque.

Putting things right

Halifax should pay Mr S £150 compensation for the poor customer service.

I can see that Halifax have already given Mr S a letter to give to the third-party company to show the cheque wasn't cashed. So, no further action is needed here.

My final decision

My final decision is that I uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr S to accept or reject my decision before 16 February 2024.

Tom Wagstaff
Ombudsman