

The complaint

Mr C complains, in his capacity as a trustee of T, that Barclays Bank UK Plc took an unreasonably long time to process the trustees' withdrawal request for funds held in T's name.

What happened

Mr C told us:

- His late parents set up trusts to provide an income for his eldest sister. Sadly, she died in 2022, and so the trustees wished to wind up the trusts and distribute funds to family members.
- Their solicitors wrote to Barclays in January 2023, enclosing a form signed by all trustees requesting that T's account be closed and the balance sent to the solicitors. Barclays did not respond.
- He contacted Barclays himself in March 2023, but it was unhelpful. One member of Barclays' staff suggested that ask his solicitors to write to the bank's Dormancy and Servicing Team, and although he passed on that recommendation, he was concerned that it was a trick by Barclays to avoid paying his family's money.

Barclays told us:

- T's account was closed due to dormancy in 2014.
- Mr C contacted it in March 2023 wanting to withdraw T's funds. It could not give any information to Mr C, because its records did not show that Mr C had any authority to deal with T's account. At that point it had already received a withdrawal request from Mr C's solicitors, but it could not tell him that because it did not have permission to do so.
- It already had authority to correspond with the solicitors, so it wrote to them in April 2023 setting out its requirements to release the money.
- It did not receive the evidence it had requested until October 2023. It released T's funds in November 2023, well within its dormancy team's 12-week service level agreement.

One of our investigators looked at this complaint, but did not uphold it. He thought Barclays had acted correctly and was not responsible for any significant delays.

Mr C did not agree with our investigator, and he said he was particularly disappointed by the conclusion that Barclays did not cause a delay. As at the middle of December 2023 he said he had received no further comments from his solicitors, but if he did, he would pass them on. One of our investigators recently reminded him that if he did have any further comments,

he should ensure they reached us by 21 March 2023, but he did not provide any additional information.

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 sorry to disappoint Mr C, but there is very little I can add to what our investigator has already said.

I don't know what happened to the request Mr C's solicitors sent to Barclays in January 2023, but I haven't seen sufficient evidence to persuade me that Barclays made any errors in respect of that request.

I am satisfied that in March 2023, Barclays did not know that Mr C was a trustee of T. That means I do not criticise Barclays for its refusal to give Mr C any information about T's account at that time.

In addition, I consider that it was reasonable for Barclays to want information from (and about) T's trustees before it released T's funds. Banks in the UK are strictly regulated, and they must ensure that they are releasing money to the correct people with the correct authority.

I haven't seen anything to suggest that Barclays received the evidence it needed before October 2023. There was a short additional delay before Barclays finally released T's funds in November 2023, but again I think that delay was reasonable in the context of T's trustees making a claim on a dormant account.

Overall, I consider that Barclays treated T's trustees fairly.

My final decision

My final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint about Barclays Bank UK Plc.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask T to accept or reject my decision before 22 April 2024.

Laura Colman
Ombudsman