

The complaint

Mr B complains about the customer service he received from Think Money Limited following a refund into his account, which he was unable to access.

What happened

Mr B opened a Thinkmoney account to assist with paying his bills. He opened a gambling account with a deposit but said the site shouldn't have allowed this as he has a gambling block with a sister site. The money was refunded, but as Thinkmoney had updated its app for customers' accounts, the refund went to Mr B's old account and he couldn't transfer it to his new account. He said he had to wait hours on the phone to get the money transferred.

Thinkmoney said Mr B raised concerns on 24 November 2023 about a refund he expected onto his old Thinkmoney card and was unhappy at the delayed credit and that this wasn't available on his new card. Thinkmoney said no delay occurred as on the changeover it ensured payment was processed onto Mr B's new card. It said the refund was credited to his new card on 24 November 2023, within the expected timescale.

Mr B decided to close his Thinkmoney account but had to wait five days for it to put his funds into his other account. He said he wasted more time on the phone and had to take out short-term loans and payment extensions in order to manage. Mr B complained to Thinkmoney.

Thinkmoney said Mr B called on 29 November 2023 to chase the whereabouts of a faster payment he had sent from his account. Thinkmoney apologised for a delay on its part. It said Mr B also said he was unhappy with the service on a previous call. Thinkmoney said its agent had been polite and professional throughout, and assisted him as best they could.

Thinkmoney apologised to Mr B for its manager not calling him back regarding his payment and for excessive call wait times. Thinkmoney pointed out that Mr B could use the app for all banking needs. Thinkmoney paid Mr B £60 compensation. Mr B wasn't happy and referred his complaint to our service. He said a manager then paid him a total of £100 compensation, but he wants £250 compensation as Thinkmoney left him with no money and no call back.

Mr B said he called three times in panic wondering where the money was, which he was accused of losing or sending to the wrong place. He said he called more than 10 times demanding a manager, but all he got after a two-hour 40-minute wait was 'I'll send an email to that team'. Mr B said the call waits and the missing funds impacted on his mental health, and he was emotionally low and threatened suicide.

Our investigator did not recommend the complaint be upheld. She said Thinkmoney didn't provide Mr B with the best service when he needed help. She said Mr B sent a payment on 29 November 2023 from his Thinkmoney account, but this was delayed, and he contacted Thinkmoney to find out why. She said this differed to the payment Mr B made on 23 November which was completed within the set timeframes.

The investigator said the £100 compensation is fair and reasonable as Mr B had told her his other account was used for his main income and expenditure, and his Thinkmoney account was for day-to-day expenditure. She said Thinkmoney said that on the same day Mr B

attempted payment he transferred £300 to his Thinkmoney account from his other account and so he had funds. And he put these funds to a gambling account to circumvent a block.

Mr B wasn't happy with the investigator's outcome complaint and requested an ombudsman review his complaint.

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 B would like compensation for the time he wasted waiting on the phone and for the inconvenience and impact on his mental health of not having access to his money for five days. I was sorry to learn that what should have been a straightforward switching process has turned into a drawn-out experience for him.

I've looked carefully at Thinkmoney's handling of Mr B's payments and the service it provided to see if it has treated Mr B fairly, and where it hasn't to consider the appropriate compensation. I've also considered all of Mr B's communications. However, other than to question the investigator's impartiality and say that she should have no further involvement in his complaint, Mr B hasn't said what is wrong with her view.

The first payment Mr B complained about concerned the gambling site refund that went to his old card. From Thinkmoney's records it transferred the funds to Mr B's new card the next day, on 24 November 2023 and Mr B was able to access the funds immediately. As this was only one day after the refund was made I can see this was within an expected and reasonable amount of time.

Mr B said the call wait times were over three hours and if he hadn't constantly chased up the transfer, it would've stayed stuck and Thinkmoney wouldn't have done anything for him. I agree that this was an excessive amount of time to wait on calls and I understand how this and the lack of a call back from a manager would have upset and inconvenienced Mr B.

The investigator reflected on what Thinkmoney told us about Mr B's use of his account at this time. To be clear, it said in answer to his point about being without any money that he had transferred £300 from another account the same day. It also said he immediately transferred this sum on to a gambling account. I can understand Mr B's frustration about the delayed payment but based on this information I can't find any detriment to him.

I can see Thinkmoney told Mr B that it would consider any evidence of financial loss that he may have suffered. I'm not aware that he has provided any such evidence and we haven't seen anything to suggest he had to borrow money at this time. Having said this, I'm pleased Thinkmoney apologised to Mr B for the delay it caused in processing his payment.

Mr B wasn't happy with the service as one of Thinkmoney's advisers asked why he didn't withdraw the money from an ATM instead of doing a transfer, but he said he didn't want to do this as he would then have to go to another bank and deposit the funds. He complained about the adviser.

I think the adviser was trying to suggest ways round Mr B's difficulties and was professional and polite. But, as I have said, after very long wait times it is hard not to be frustrated at anything that appears to be unhelpful.

Although I can understand Mr B's frustration, I think the impact of the poor service upon him is fairly reflected in Thinkmoney's payment of £100 compensation.

My final decision

For the reasons I have given it is my final decision that the complaint is not upheld.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr B to accept or reject my decision before 5 June 2024.

Andrew Fraser
Ombudsman