

## **The complaint**

Miss M has complained that Santander UK plc didn't remove fraud-related markers from her record in 2022 when they said they would.

## **What happened**

Santander decided to close Miss M's account in 2021 after a large credit was paid into her account. They also placed a marker against her name on the industry fraud database, CIFAS.

After review, whilst Santander wouldn't offer Miss M another account, they agreed to remove the fraud marker from the database.

Since that period Miss M has continued to have difficulty in opening an account and worried about why this was. She also recently gave birth and was finding this to be an increasingly difficult issue. She discovered that Santander had not removed another marker from an industry database back in January 2022 which she felt was the root of her problems.

Miss M brought her complaint to the ombudsman service.

Whilst Santander removed this other marker in October 2023 and Miss M was able to open a further account, she felt she should be paid proper compensation. Santander initially offered £150.

Our investigator felt an appropriate amount of compensation was £500. Miss M didn't agree and felt an amount in the range of £1,500 to £5,000 would be fairer.

Santander agreed they would be willing to pay Miss M £500.

As no agreement could be reached, Miss M's complaint has been referred to an ombudsman.

## **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've reached the same outcome as our investigator. I'll explain why.

The only issue for me to consider is the level of appropriate compensation which Miss M should receive.

Santander has admitted there was an error. Whilst the CIFAS marker was removed, another external marker remained on her record until this was also removed in later 2023.

For more than a year and a half Miss M had been without her own bank account. After giving birth to her child, she was also finding difficulty in getting child benefit paid that was due without an account. She's had to rely on her partner for help paying bills and making

purchases.

### **Putting things right**

Like our investigator, I believe an award of £500 is fair and reasonable. I say this because the impact of Santander's mistake has caused considerable distress. It has also caused significant inconvenience and disruption to Miss M being able to lead a normal life. Being pregnant during this period would suggest there was an additional impact on her.

I note, however, that once being notified of the issue in 2023 Santander did quickly attend to the issue and sort things. If this had been otherwise I may have considered awarding Miss M more but overall I believe £500 is fair.

### **My final decision**

For the reasons given, my final decision is to instruct Santander UK plc to pay Miss M £500 for the distress caused.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss M to accept or reject my decision before 6 May 2024.

Sandra Quinn  
**Ombudsman**