

The complaint

Ms F complains about Barclays Bank UK PLC causing her a financial loss when applying US dollars to her US dollar and GBP accounts. Also, the service she received when she complained.

What happened

Ms F says she was sent US\$4,950 to her USD account with Barclays and her complaint is that:

1. She lost US\$223.34 as Barclays credited her USD account with US\$4,726.66 rather than US\$4,950.
2. When she subsequently paid US\$4,726.66 into her GBP account, she suffered a further loss as Barclays applied an exchange rate of 1.2934 rather than a more favourable 'buy back' rate.
3. When she called to complain, Barclays were rude, evasive and quickly closed her complaint down.

Ms F brought her complaint to our service, seeking a refund of the exchange rate losses and compensation for her time and trouble. But our investigator couldn't see that Barclays had made any errors.

As Ms F remains dissatisfied, her complaint has been referred to me to look at.

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 not upholding this complaint and I'll explain why.

As Ms F had been sent US\$4,950, I can understand her upset at the US\$223.34 deduction. However, there is evidence that Barclays received and correctly executed an instruction to credit her USD account with GBP £3870.82 and not US\$4,950.

I appreciate that Ms F wasn't aware that there had been a USD to GBP conversion before the US\$4,950 reached her account and, to avoid the conversion loss, would've wanted Barclays to have either returned the funds or have credited them to her GBP account. However, I'm satisfied that Barclays correctly followed their procedure and, if the funds were sent in US\$, Ms F's request for a refund of the double conversion cost should be taken up with the sender and not Barclays.

Regarding Ms F's transfer of US\$4,726.66 from her USD Currency Account to her Sterling Current Account, I'm satisfied that this transaction, which required a foreign exchange conversion rate, was processed by Ms F.

Ms F feels that Barclays should've used a more favourable exchange rate. Having considered this point, I would've expected Ms F to have made exchange rate enquiries before instructing Barclays to make the conversion. I can't see that Ms F did this and the file shows she completed this transaction online. If Ms F had made enquires with Barclays, she would've found out that:

- Barclays preferential buyback rates only apply to foreign currency in the form of cash
- The terms and conditions of her account say:

'If you ask us to make a payment in a different currency from that of your account, we'll convert it based on the Barclays reference exchange rate to which we add a margin to create the exchange rate that will apply to your transaction'

And she would've been informed of the position prior to completing the transaction. I can fully understand Ms F's frustration, especially as the funds arrived in GBP and she would've wanted this to be transferred to her GBP account, but I can't see that Barclays made an error.

With regards to Ms F's dissatisfaction over Barclays' service when she raised a complaint, I requested a recording of all her calls.

Having listened to these, I don't think Barclays' representatives weren't rude to Ms F. Ms F was clearly upset and frustrated and, on separate calls, she was warned that the call would be disconnected if she continued to talk over them, and I thought this was fair and communicated in a reasonable way.

I appreciate Ms F wished to speak to a more senior complaints representative and was dissatisfied with Barclays' final response letter lacking a detailed explanation. Whilst I think the letter should've been more detailed, I must point out that there are rules (known as DISP Rules) laid down by the Financial Conduct Authority which means complaint handling is not a regulated activity. So, I'm unable to consider complaints about response letters or escalation processes.

Having considered all the information on file, for the reasons mentioned above, I'm not upholding this complaint against Barclays Bank UK PLC.

My final decision

My final decision is not to uphold this complaint against Barclays Bank UK PLC.

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

Paul Douglas
Ombudsman