

The complaint

Mr S complains about the delay Barclays Bank UK PLC (Barclays) caused in their processing of a cash ISA transfer to another financial institution (which I'll call A). As a result, Mr S says he lost credit interest and suffered distress and inconvenience.

What happened

In December 2023, Mr S made arrangements with Barclays to transfer £85,000 of cash ISA funds to A upon maturity of his Barclays' account. When Barclays received Mr S's signed form from A, they noticed the signature didn't match with their records so wrote to Mr S asking him to update this in a branch. Mr S did so and let Barclays and A know. In two of his phone calls to Barclays to chase up the transfer, Mr S was given wrong information, specifically the name of the company to whom he was transferring his ISA, and also date information about when the funds would be received by A. He was also not called back when agreed with an update.

Mr S made more phone calls and visited Barclays again, and a cheque for the transfer was sent to A and the full ISA transfer was successfully completed around a month after maturity.

Mr S complained to Barclays about the delay, the credit interest he had lost, the signature requirement and the inconvenience he had suffered. Barclays investigated the complaint and issued a final response letter. In it, they didn't uphold the signature requirement but did apologise for the poor experience in the phone calls to them. Barclays credited Mr S with £50 for distress and inconvenience, £30 for phone calls and £296.46 for the loss of interest.

Mr S was not satisfied with this and brought the complaint to our service, saying whilst he agreed with the interest figure Barclays had credited, he was escalating the complaint to ensure a more appropriate level of compensation for the errors made by Barclays.

Our investigator began to look into the complaint, liaising with Barclays as necessary. Through our service, Barclays then amended their offer, increasing the £80 compensation by an additional £100. After we communicated this to Mr S, he rejected it saying a compensation total of between £250 and £300 would be more appropriate mentioning that Barclays' errors could have cost him £4,000.

After our investigator contacted Barclays with Mr S's response, Barclays said that their total offer of £180 was fair so our investigator further reviewed the complaint giving their view that considering what had happened, they agreed that the compensation offer was fair.

Mr S remained unhappy with this outcome. He mentioned the signature issue should have been dealt with earlier, everyone he spoke to at Barclays had little idea what the issue was and, Barclays were irresponsible using second class post to send the cheque. He 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.

I have looked at the information Barclays has supplied to see if it has acted within its terms and conditions and to see if it has treated Mr S fairly.

If I don't mention any specific point, it's not because I failed to take it on board and think about it, but because I don't think I need to comment on it to reach what I think is a fair and reasonable outcome. No discourtesy is intended by me in taking this approach.

What's not in question is that errors were made; specifically, the delay of the transfer, the accuracy of information Barclays gave in two phone calls, and a call back not being made. I'm satisfied that within Barclays' apologies and the actions they took to put Mr S back to his original position, they treated him fairly. I will explain my reasons for reaching this conclusion.

One aspect I know Mr S feels strongly about is the signature issue, in that asking him to provide an up-to-date signature was inconvenient, caused a delay to the transfer and, he feels it could have been avoided by asking for it earlier in his relationship with Barclays. Within Barclays' processes for checking the validity of a customer cheque is the requirement to ensure the signature on the cheque matches that which they hold on record. And if this isn't the case, they are within their rights to ask the customer for an up-to-date version which necessitates a branch visit. It's regrettable that Barclays have closed a branch that was convenient to Mr S but again, they are entitled to make the business decision to do so, and it wouldn't be reasonable to ask Barclays to cover the cost of such visits.

In terms of whether Barclays could have asked for an updated signature earlier, they are reliant on a customer recreating their signature consistently, and will only ask for that updated signature when they are presented with a situation involving a mismatch.

Mr S has mentioned that Barclays' errors could have cost him £4,000 but this service doesn't consider potential loss, so I can't address this point in my considerations.

In Mr S's communications to our investigator, when talking about compensation, he said of his calls with Barclays "everyone I contacted had little idea on what the issue were" but I've seen evidence that [Mr S](#) did receive good service from Barclays by telephone, such as when he was chasing up the cheque, so I can't uphold this.

I want to address Mr S's comments that he regards the sending of the cheque by Barclays using second class post as irresponsible, and that it could have been lost. Barclays have processes agreed with the regulator and within that, they are entitled to use whatever mail dispatch system they choose, in this case second class post for ISA transfer cheques. Plus, as we have seen, the cheque arrived safely using that method.

Turning to the compensation payment of £180 that Barclays have offered, I regard this as fair and reasonable in the circumstances of the complaint. I consider that it was helpful that after Mr S's complaint was referred to us, Barclays reached out making efforts to bring this to a resolution. I consider Mr S's complaint to fall into this service's guidelines of between £100 and £300 compensation for 'a large single mistake required a reasonable effort to sort out. These typically result in an impact that lasts a few days, or even weeks, and cause either some distress, inconvenience, disappointment, or loss of expectation'. Whilst I regard Barclays' initial offer as insufficient, after they offered an additional £100 to bring the total to

£180, I do think this amount accurately represents the impact to Mr S of the distress and inconvenience he was caused by Barclays' poor service.

Finally, considering that Barclays have corrected the issue by putting Mr S back into the position he was in had the errors not occurred, including the payment of lost interest and ensuring no impact on his ISA history or credit file, I cannot fairly require Barclays to do anything further.

My final decision

For the reasons I have given it is my final decision that the complaint is upheld. In view of the evidence I've seen that Barclays have already credited Mr S with £376.46, I require Barclays Bank UK PLC to pay Mr S further compensation of £100.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr S to accept or reject my decision before 21 May 2024.

Chris Blamires
Ombudsman