

The complaint

Mrs P has complained that Vanquis Bank Limited's ("Vanquis") process to change the nominated account registered on her Vanquis account is inefficient and convoluted.

What happened

Mrs P says that she tried to change the nominated account registered on her Vanquis account on 3 January 2024. But when she sent Vanquis a copy of a bank statement via email it was not accepted.

As Mrs P was unhappy with the process and how long it took to change the nominated account, Mrs P raised a complaint with Vanquis.

Vanquis issued its final response letter on 19 January 2024 and didn't uphold the complaint. It said that it requires bank statements of the nominated account to verify that it is a valid account and one owned by the (Vanquis) account holder. Vanquis explained that it only accepts copies of bank statements by post at present. It said that this was due to the increase in cybercrime and also because emails are not secure and can be intercepted.

Unhappy with Vanquis' response to the complaint, Mrs P referred her complaint to this service. One of our investigators assessed the complaint, but overall they were unable to conclude that Vanquis had done anything substantially wrong. And so they did not uphold the complaint.

As Mrs P did not accept the investigator's findings, the matter was referred for an ombudsman's decision.

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 reviewed everything, I don't uphold this complaint.

I understand that Mrs P is unhappy having to send a copy of her bank statement via the post, as she'd prefer to send a copy via email.

I think it may help to explain that it is beyond the remit of this service to dictate to Vanquis, or indeed any financial business, how it should run its operations. Therefore, I would be unable to instruct Vanquis to change its processes, even if I thought they could be improved. Instead, all I can do is consider if Vanquis dealt with Mrs P fairly and reasonably.

In this case Vanquis says that it has opted to receive bank statements (when account holders change their nominated account) via the post only. This is because it says emails are not secure and can be intercepted.

Overall, although using the postal service may be slightly more inconvenient for Mrs P, at the same time Vanquis has given a reasonable explanation as to why it currently only accepts statements sent via the post. It is the case that emails are not secure and can be intercepted. Therefore, I can't say that in applying its policy in relation to Mrs P's request to change nominated account was unfair or unreasonable. Vanquis has a duty of care to protect its customers' money, accounts and data and I think that employing such a policy is a reasonable way to do that.

Mrs P has said that she offered to provide Vanquis with a welcome letter rather than a bank statement, but Vanquis insisted on asking for an actual bank statement that contains 3 months of account activity. Mrs P says that this is intrusive.

Vanquis has said that it needs this information as part of its money laundering checks. And overall, I'm satisfied that the information that Vanquis asked for is reasonable. Indeed, it is fairly typical of the information that financial businesses may ask for when completing such checks. So again, whilst Mrs P may feel that being required to provide such information is intrusive, I'm unable to say that Vanquis' request for this information was unfair or unreasonable.

In her complaint, Mrs P has also said that she is unable to obtain a paper statement with her name on it from her provider. Mrs P says that nowadays she cannot have paper statements. However, as far as I'm aware most, if not all, current account providers can provide bank statements upon request – and that is the case even if the account holder has opted for paperless statements. So, although I recognise that Mrs P had difficulties in printing off a statement that included her name on it (presumably by accessing her account online), this was something that I think she likely could've obtained by contacting her current account provider.

I appreciate that Mrs P has found Vanquis' process to change her nominated account to be cumbersome and more hassle than she had expected. But, at the same time, I can't see anything that was particularly unreasonable or unfair. Nor can I see that Vanquis has treated Mrs P unfairly.

The information that Vanquis asked for seemed to be fairly standard information that many financial businesses may ask for when completing such checks. And I think it gave a reasonable explanation as to why it wanted the evidence of the new nominated account to be provided by post. I say this especially as it says that all transactions into and out of the account go via the nominated account. And so I appreciate why it may have heightened security measures surrounding the process to change the nominated account.

So overall I do not uphold this complaint.

My final decision

Because of the reasons given above, I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs P to accept or reject my decision before 16 September 2024.

Thomas White
Ombudsman