

The complaint

Mrs T complains that HSBC UK Bank Plc hasn't provided the support it should have regarding a payment that wasn't received by the payee. She wants HSBC to provide an official document with comprehensive details of the transaction and to pay her £2,000 to cover the costs that have been incurred due to this issue.

What happened

Mrs T made a payment from her global money account on 11 October 2023. She provided the payee's details but says that despite confirmation from HSBC and documentation provided to the payee the payment wasn't successfully received. She explained that this has led to legal proceedings against her. Mrs T said that she followed up with HSBC, but it hasn't offered any substantial information beyond confirming the details of the initial transaction. She said that the issue has not only cause financial stress but also caused immense stress and anxiety. She wants the issue to be resolved and to be reimbursed the costs she has incurred.

HSBC issued a final response letter dated 11 January 2024. It said that Mrs T contacted it to trace a payment on 14 November 2023, at which time an incident was raised. It said that the issue was escalated to trace the payment and it would update Mrs T by 30 November 2023 at the latest. It said that a further note was issued dated 28 December and this was requested again on 5 January 2024 as Mrs T needed it to take legal action. HSBC apologised that it had failed to communicate with Mrs T properly and credited her account with £100 because of this.

Mrs T wasn't satisfied with HSBC's response and referred her complaint to this service.

Our investigator was satisfied that HSBC had taken appropriate steps to locate Mrs T's payment and provided her with the information to show the payment had been completed and sent to the input account. She explained that HSBC conducted a trace with its international partner which confirmed the funds were sent to the beneficiary account. She found that HSBC had provided Mrs T with reasonable information in the form of letters on HSBC letterhead confirming the payment was made and the details of this. She noted that HSBC hadn't kept Mrs T up to date as it said it would in November 2023 but thought the apology and £100 compensation was a reasonable resolution for this.

Mrs T didn't accept our investigator's view. She provided a timeline of events explaining that she was advised to set up a global money account to make the international transaction which she did on 11 October 2023. However, at end October the payment hadn't been received by the payee. She called HSBC and was told there would be confirmation of the payment on her November statement. During November Mrs T said she made several calls trying to trace the payment and attended a HSBC branch to request further information but was told that global money account issues had to be dealt with by phone. It wasn't until 16 January 2024 that she received a letter from HSBC stating the payment had been completed. Mrs T asked for further details, but HSBC said it was unable to provide any further details and raised a further incident. She chased this in February but nothing new was provided. In May 2024, she asked for the details again and provided the payee's

requirements to trace the payment but said that HSBC said that no further information could be provided.

Mrs T said that she wasn't ever provided with the information needed to trace the payment and never informed by HSBC that it had received a response from its banking partner. She said the delays and unwillingness of HSBC to provide proper assistance had cost her significant amounts in legal fees, repayments with interest and caused her mental health issues.

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 can see this issue has caused Mrs T stress and I note her comments about the costs she has incurred because of the payment not being received by the payee. But for me to uphold this complaint I would need to be satisfied that HSBC had done something wrong regarding the payment process or hadn't provided the service it should have in response to the issue Mrs T raised.

I have first considered the payment. Mrs T made an international payment from her global money account on 11 October 2023. Mrs T input the payment details and HSBC's system notes show the transaction as completed. HSBC received confirmation from its partner bank that the payment was sent correctly and as no funds had been returned it said the payment would have been credited to the payee's account. Based on this I do not find there is evidence to suggest that HSBC did anything wrong in the processing of Mrs T's international payment request.

Mrs T was informed that the payee hadn't received the funds, so I find it reasonable that she contacted HSBC about this. I have considered whether HSBC took the steps we would expect it to, given the circumstances, and whether it provided Mrs T with a reasonable level of support.

Mrs T contacted HSBC about the issue with the payment in November 2023. An incident report was raised at that time and HSBC put a trace on the payment through the relevant team. HSBC provided Mrs T with the payment reference and said that it could take up to 15 days for the results of the trace and said an update would be provided by 30 November. While the trace was actioned, Mrs T wasn't updated by 30 November, and I can see she had to chase a response. HSBC's system notes show contact on 28 December 2023 confirming the transaction was completed and that the money hadn't been returned. It said Mrs T should contact the payee. Confirmation of the payment being completed was sent in a letter to Mrs T dated 11 January 2024.

Mrs T contacted HSBC on 11 January 2024, to say she hadn't received the confirmation letter but this wasn't what she had been requesting as her bank statement confirmed the transaction. Instead, she needed an official letter from HSBC containing the name of the person who owned the account the money was sent from (Mrs T), the account number from which the payment was made and the account number the money was paid to. Mrs T explained that if the payment couldn't be traced legal proceedings would continue against her. I can appreciate that this was a very stressful time for Mrs T given the legal implications of the payment not being received. But I can see that HSBC provided Mrs T with a letter on HSBC letterhead dated 16 January 2024, confirming the payment amount and date, the account this was made from and the account the payment was made to. As this was what Mrs T had requested, I find that HSBC did provide reasonable support at this time.

Unfortunately, the payee still couldn't locate the payment and Mrs T contacted HSBC again. She thought the issue was that as the payment went through another bank the account number from which the payee would receive the money was different to that provided by HSBC. She asked HSBC to contact the intermediary bank for more details. A further incident was raised but no new information was received. I can understand that this is frustrating for Mrs T but in this case, I find that HSBC has attempted to trace the payment and provided the information it had in letter form to Mrs T.

Taking all of the above into account, I find that HSBC has taken reasonable action to try to locate Mrs T's payment and also support her with her information requirements. However, I agree that it didn't provide Mrs T with the updates it should have when she first made contact meaning she had to chase for an update. HSBC acknowledged this in its final response letter and paid Mrs T £100. I find this reasonable.

My final decision

My final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs T to accept or reject my decision before 4 October 2024.

Jane Archer
Ombudsman