

## **The complaint**

Mr C has complained about a delay he experienced when he transferred two Cash Individual Savings Accounts (“ISA”) to another ISA provider. Mr C says that Leeds Building Society (“LBS”) was at fault for the transfer being processed late.

## **What happened**

Mr C applied to transfer two ISA’s from his LBS accounts to a new provider, but the transfer was delayed.

Mr C complained to LBS about this. LBS issued its final response to Mr C’s complaint on 29 December 2023. LBS said that it didn’t receive the ISA transfer forms through the post until 18 December 2023, at which point LBS says it actioned the ISA transfer request on the same day. LBS said that any delays in the postal service is outside of its control. It also said that when Mr C called on 12 December 2023, LBS verified it had the right contact details in case it needs to get in contact with him, but didn’t promise it would call him.

Unhappy with LBS’s response to the complaint, Mr C referred his complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service.

One of our investigators assessed the complaint and they ultimately concluded that LBS had likely received an email which included the ISA transfer forms from Mr C’s prospective provider on 12 December 2023. And so they concluded that LBS had delayed processing Mr C’s ISA transfers.

Because of this, the investigator recommended that LBS pay the difference in interest between what he did earn on his money with his LBS, and what he would’ve earned on his money had the ISA been transferred to the new provider sooner. The Investigator said this amounted to a total of £24.14. They also said that LBS should pay Mr C £250 compensation for the distress and inconvenience caused to him.

LBS said that although it couldn’t locate the emails that Mr C’s prospective provider had apparently sent it, it was willing to accept the investigator’s recommendations to resolve the complaint. Mr C didn’t accept the investigator’s recommendations as he wanted more compensation.

Because of this, Mr C’s complaint 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 considered everything, I agree with the conclusions that the investigator reached for broadly the same reasons. I will explain why.

The investigator said that LBS had, most likely (based on the available evidence) received emails from Mr C’s prospective provider on the 12 December 2023 and therefore concluded

that it'd delayed the processing of Mr C's ISA transfer forms – as one of the ISA transfers occurred on 18 December 2023 and the other on 29 December 2023. And given that LBS accepted the investigator's assessment, that means all that is left for me to consider now is whether the redress recommended by the investigator is fair and reasonable in the circumstances. And overall, I think it is.

I say this because the Investigator concluded that Mr C had likely missed out on a total amount of £24.14 in interest due to the delays in his ISAs being transferred. Neither Mr C nor LBS disputed this amount. Therefore, I see no reason why a different amount should be awarded to reflect the interest that Mr C missed out on earning.

Turning now to the award for distress and inconvenience, I note that Mr C says that a higher award is warranted. I can see that Mr C went to a fair amount of effort in an attempt to get to the bottom of what happened and understand why his ISA transfer was taking so long. But equally, Mr C knew the whereabouts of his money (as it hadn't been transferred as soon as he was expecting) and when he called LBS he was aware it had the correct contact details for him, should it need to contact him in relation to the transfer. I'm also mindful that the ISA transfer forms were originally sent in the post by his prospective provider. And given that the forms were first sent on 5 December 2023 via the post i.e. in the lead up to Christmas, I don't find it particularly surprising if they were delayed in the post.

Nevertheless, when weighing up the concern caused to Mr C and the inconvenience caused to him in chasing matters up, I think £250 is a fair and reasonable award in the circumstances.

I can see that Mr C didn't accept the investigator's assessment, in part because he wanted a detailed assessment of what exactly happened and when. But I don't think it's necessary to do that here as it's already been accepted by all the parties to the complaint that there was a delay, how long the delay was, and how this disadvantaged Mr B. I say that bearing in mind that the investigator's assessment was based on the conclusion that LBS likely did receive the email from Mr C's prospective provider on 12 December 2023, even though LBS insists (after checking its records) that it didn't.

Therefore, whilst I appreciate that Mr C may've wanted more detail in this decision, at the same time I think that what the investigator recommended does fairly put right the shortcomings that occurred when he went to transfer his ISAs. And as the investigator has already made clear, it is beyond the remit of this service to tell LBS how it should operate or what processes it should have in place to process ISA transfers.

### **Putting things right**

To put matters right I require LBS to pay:

- £24.14 for the interest that Mr C missed out on due to the delay in the ISA transfer; and
- £250 for the distress and inconvenience caused by this matter.

### **My final decision**

Because of the reasons given above, I uphold this complaint and require Leeds Building Society to do what I have outlined above to put matters right, in full and final settlement of this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr C to accept or reject my decision before 11 October 2024.

Thomas White  
**Ombudsman**