

The complaint

Mr S complains FCE Bank plc trading as Ford Money (Ford) provided poor customer service when dealing with his ISA transfer.

What happened

Mr S says in early January 2024 he asked Ford to organise an ISA transfer from another provider. Mr S says Ford initially made a mistake and sent the ISA transfer request to the wrong division within the same provider and as a result this was rejected.

Mr S says Ford never provided him with any updates regarding the progress of his transfer request and it failed to complete this within the 15-day period it promised. Mr S says he was left to chase Ford and the other provider to understand what was going on.

Mr S says this matter has caused him stress and inconvenience and the £25 Ford offered by way of apology doesn't go far enough.

Ford says it accepts it sent the ISA transfer request to the wrong provider, but it was working in the background to correct matters and was only two days outside its service level agreement. Ford agree it should have contacted Mr S to keep him updated but not all of the delay was down to them as the other provider had a part to play in that too.

Mr S wasn't happy with Ford's response and referred the matter to this service.

The investigator looked at all the available information and upheld the complaint. The investigator felt Ford were responsible for the initial mistake and didn't proactively keep Mr S informed of the delay.

The investigator felt the compensation of £25 didn't go far enough and recommended that should be increased to £100.

Ford didn't agree with the investigator's view but were prepared to increase its offer of compensation from £25 to £60.

The investigator felt the £100 suggested was more appropriate and Mr S agreed, but Ford didn't agree and asked for the matter to be referred to an ombudsman for a final 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 done so, I will also be upholding this complaint and I will explain how I have come to my decision.

I can understand it would have been frustrating and upsetting for Mr S to experience a delay in the transfer of his ISA request, due to an error made by Ford and not to be kept informed of what was happening for some time.

So, when looking at this complaint I will consider if Ford's communication throughout the ISA transfer was adequate, given it had initially made a mistake when arranging the transfer from another provider. I will also consider if the compensation it has offered Mr S is reasonable.

Mr S's complaint centres around the fact Ford initially sent his ISA transfer request to the wrong provider, and it never kept him informed of the progress, leaving him to make calls to both parties in the transaction and that was stressful, worrying and caused unnecessary inconvenience to him.

Ford accepted it sent the ISA transfer request to the wrong business and it could have done more to keep Mr S informed what was happening. That said, Ford says it was chasing matters in the background and not all of the delays were due to them, as the other providers processing of the transfer also caused the delays.

Ford says it acted as quickly as it could after it became aware of its original mistake. With that in mind Ford feels its revised offer of compensation of £60 is fair and it doesn't feel the investigator's suggestion of £100 is warranted.

I understand the points Ford makes but I'm not fully persuaded by its argument. I say this because although Ford may in the background have taken action to correct its initial mistake, that is something I would expect it do as the first stage of putting matters right.

So, although it may well be the case that the other providers process added to any delay, the fact remains the initial mistake caused the problem for Mr S. So here, it was important Ford having made that mistake, kept Mr S fully informed of what was happening with the ISA transfer but I can't see it did that here.

It's fair to say, while ISA transfers can go wrong from time to time and Ford is familiar with the ISA transfer process, that isn't something Mr S would be expected to be familiar with.

It's reasonable to say it would be stressful for Mr S not knowing what was happening for some weeks surrounding his ISA transfer. So taking that into account, I take the view Ford didn't do enough to put Mr S's mind at rest that the ISA transfer was being dealt with here.

So, like the investigator, I'm satisfied a more appropriate level of redress would be £100 given the trouble and upset this matter caused Mr S.

While Ford will be disappointed with my decision, I feel this is a fair outcome here.

Putting things right

I instruct FCE Bank plc trading as Ford Money to pay Mr S a total of £100 for the trouble and upset caused.

My final decision

My final decision is that I uphold this complaint.

I instruct FCE Bank plc trading as Ford Money to pay Mr S a total of £100 for the trouble and upset caused

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr S to accept or reject my decision before 13 November 2024.

Barry White
Ombudsman