

The complaint

Ms J complains that HSBC UK Bank Plc (HSBC) have created two profiles for her. She says that has created confusion about the amount outstanding on her account.

What happened

Ms J opened a new credit card account with HSBC in June 2023. She transferred balances to the account that totalled £3,750 and she set up a direct debit to pay £300 towards the balance each month.

In April 2024 HSBC wrote to Ms J to tell her they would close her account if she didn't use it. She made a purchase but when she was unable to access her account in the mobile app, she became concerned that the account may have been closed. Ms J contacted HSBC and they explained that the account had been closed due to inactivity but that there was no outstanding balance. But Ms J later learnt that the bank's agent had been reviewing an old, closed, account and that the newer account hadn't been closed and there was still a balance to pay.

HSBC apologised for the confusion. They explained that Ms J had multiple profiles that they were trying to link. They offered Ms J £75 to compensate her for any distress and inconvenience caused. Ms J didn't think that was sufficient. She thought HSBC had damaged her credit file and she was upset they had given her conflicting information.

Ms J referred her complaint to this Service and HSBC increased their offer of compensation by a further £50. Our investigator noted the problems Ms J had been having but she thought HSBC's offer was a fair one and she didn't think they needed to take any further action.

Ms J didn't agree so her complaint has been referred to me, 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.

Where the information I've got is incomplete, unclear, or contradictory, as some of it is here, I have to base my decision on the balance of probabilities.

I've read and considered the whole file, but I'll concentrate my comments on what I think is relevant. If I don't comment on any specific point, it's not because I've failed to take it on board and think about it but because I don't think I need to comment on it in order to reach what I think is the right outcome.

I can understand that Ms J would have been distressed to be provided with inaccurate information but, on balance, I think HSBC's offer of compensation is reasonable in the circumstances.

It must have been confusing for Ms J to have been told there was nothing to pay on the account only to later be told that there was still a significant balance. But I've not seen evidence to suggest that balance wasn't due and, given the amount, I think it's likely Ms J knew the balance hadn't been cleared.

HSBC haven't been able to link the two profiles. It seems that is for technical issues, and I don't think it would be fair for me to tell them to do so if the capability doesn't exist. I've seen that Ms J now has access to the mobile app so that she can see her balance and can be assured of the amounts due. I don't think HSBC need to do anything else in that respect.

HSBC have now offered Ms J £125 in respect of the issues she's experienced and having considered all of the circumstances I think that is sufficient.

My final decision

For the reasons I've given above, I uphold this complaint in part and tell HSBC Bank Plc to pay Ms J £125 to compensate her for the distress and inconvenience caused. They may deduct £75 if that has already been paid.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Ms J to accept or reject my decision before 28 October 2024.

Phillip McMahon
Ombudsman