

## **The complaint**

Mr D complains that Barclays Bank UK PLC failed to provide him with advice about investing a large lump sum that was in his current account and he has missed out on interest.

## **What happened**

In 2019 Mr D deposited over £600,000 into his Barclays account. He wanted financial advice on where to put his money and arranged different appointments with Barclays' advisors in branch. Mr D said during this time Barclays made no mention of his options, such as an ISA. This went on for several years and when he came to discuss with another bank they advised about an ISA and explained he lost £50,000 due to the money being in a current account.

Mr D complained to Barclays that since 2019 none of its branch staff had advised him about savings accounts with higher interest or other options. Mr D said he had been misled by Barclays and he wanted to be reimbursed for the interest he had lost.

Barclays responded that savings reviews had taken place including a branch appointment on 30 January 2019 with a savings review where Bonds and ISA's were discussed. Barclays also pointed to the information available through Mr D's online account and its website to check savings rates. It said that for a few years the Everyday Savings account which Mr D held was the only instant access account other than an ISA that it offered.

Barclays said that from November 2023 Mr D opened accounts and ISAs with the best return on his savings and his Everyday Savings account closed. Barclays said it can't contact every customer about interest rates although Mr D had contacted the branch so should have been given information he needed. It said Mr D could have opened ISAs with any bank and it wouldn't compensate for 'lost' interest, but paid him £150 as a gesture of goodwill. Barclays also spoke to Mr D and offered £200 for his inconvenience, which he declined.

Mr D wasn't satisfied with this response and referred his complaint to our service. Our investigator said Mr D calculated a loss of £37,000 from the interest he would now earn in a year. The investigator said interest rates had increased since 2019 and current financial products weren't available then. He couldn't ask Barclays to pay Mr D for lost interest as his saving goals may have changed, and it wouldn't be possible to calculate potential loss.

As to the Barclays' service, the investigator thought that from its notes of the reviews various types of accounts were discussed over the years, including ISAs. He said Mr D may not recall this or the products didn't fit his savings goals, or the adviser could've been more thorough. He said considering the number of appointments Barclays could have done more to ensure Mr D understood his options and that he could seek independent financial advice. He said Barclays offer of £200 more compensation was fair for the service Mr D received.

Mr D wasn't happy with this response and requested an ombudsman review his complaint.

## **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.

Mr D complains that he did not receive advice on his finances when he had booked financial advice appointments with Barclays in branch. He wants Barclays to pay him the interest he says he has lost.

I was sorry to see that what should have been a straightforward process of learning about financial products and investment options turned into a prolonged and drawn-out experience for Mr D. Part of my role is to determine whether what took place was reasonable and whether Barclays followed the process correctly. In reaching a decision as to whether Barclays acted fairly, I've taken into account the relevant rules and guidelines along with good industry practice.

Mr D told us that he hadn't told Barclays at his meetings how much he had wanted to invest, and he is not looking for interest to match the ISA he now has at a far better rate than was available in 2019, but to cover the interest for his initial payment into the account, though he is aware his balances have reduced over time.

Mr D's appointments with Barclays to discuss his potential investment took place some years ago. I have taken both parties' recollections into account but as these differ I have to consider what is most likely to have happened in light of any other available evidence. In this case we have Barclays business records which include notes completed contemporaneously of its meetings with Mr D.

Mr D told us that Barclays didn't tell him about its ISA products. Barclays' notes of its meetings with Mr D show that it reviewed and discussed his financial situation and that various types of accounts were discussed, including ISAs. In fact its record for its meeting with Mr D for 30 January 2019 states, 'Products Offered: 2 Year Premier Flexible Cash ISA'. This contradicts Mr D's recall of the meetings, but as I have said the notes were contemporaneous and so I have to give them more weight than Mr D's recall after several years.

It's not possible to say what level of detail Mr D was given about Barclays' ISAs or other options or what action he might have taken had he fully comprehended the investment opportunities. I say this because an ISA was clearly available to him but would have been limited a tiny fraction of his lump sum. There were also different savings accounts he could have held, albeit that the interest rates were far lower than they are now.

I agree with the investigator that it isn't possible to say which of the available financial products might have met Mr D's investment requirements at the time and so it isn't possible to conclude that he should be compensated as interest may not have been 'lost' in any directly comparable way.

Barclays is correct to say that at the time it wasn't required to reach out to customers and bring investment opportunities to their attention. I'm pleased to note that earlier this year Barclays has started a "Customer Charter" which means it is required to offer customers savings products that may improve the interest they may earn.

I can't be certain that had this applied when Mr D had appointments to discuss his finances it would have led to a different outcome. I say this because I can see from the records that Barclays discussed various savings products with Mr D over the past few years. Having said this, once Mr D became aware of ISA opportunities from another bank he opened an ISA with Barclays and put the rest of his funds in other accounts.

I can see that Mr D has been caused some frustration and inconvenience in his dealing with Barclays which the bank has acknowledged.

Barclays has paid Mr D £150 compensation and offered him a further payment of £200. I think this total of £350 compensation is a very reasonable reflection of the distress and inconvenience he has been caused and I can't reasonably require Barclays to do anything further. I recommend that Mr D contacts Barclays to accept the payment of £200.

**My final decision**

For the reasons I have given it is my final decision that the complaint is not upheld.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr D to accept or reject my decision before 3 December 2024.

Andrew Fraser  
**Ombudsman**