

## **The complaint**

Mrs E complains about Interactive Investor Trading Limited (Interactive). She said Interactive took a long time to provide her with a consolidated tax certificate (CTC). Mrs E said she would like Interactive to compensate her for the distress and inconvenience Interactive has caused her.

## **What happened**

Mrs E held investment trusts with a company called Aberdeen. Aberdeen acquired Interactive in 2022. Aberdeen decided to close some accounts and give those affected the choice of either having their account migrated to Interactive or moving their investments elsewhere.

Mrs E said she took the opportunity to transfer her investments to a third party. She said though, that for a short while one of her investments was migrated to Interactive. She said she was paid some dividends in the 2023/24 tax year. She said, after contacting Interactive, she was sent a CTC for this new account, as for the short window of time, two dividends were paid in. But she was not given a CTC for the old Aberdeen account, something she needed so she could complete her tax return.

Mrs E said she had issues contacting both Aberdeen and Interactive, in her attempts at obtaining a CTC for her old account. She said without this, she was unable to complete her tax return. She said she had taken a considerable amount of time chasing them about this.

Interactive said in response, that it was responsible for Mrs E's account as it had migrated over from Aberdeen. It said that it was sorry Mrs E wasn't provided with the level of service expected during these initial calls. It said when she called she should have been provided with the correct contact number. It sent her a £30 cheque as compensation.

Interactive said in relation to the CTC, it generated it for tax year 2023/24. It said the certificate was available to view on Mrs E's account from 14 May 2024. It said Mrs E also contacted it on 12 July 2024, and it sent the documents via the post. It said there were no delays, so it was unable to uphold this aspect of Mrs E's complaint.

Mrs E was not happy with Interactive's response and referred her complaint to our service. She said in response to what Interactive said, that it was not correct, when it said it sent the CTC in the post to her. She said it sent the CTC for her new account in the post, which she already had a copy of. She said she needed a CTC for her old account.

An investigator looked into Mrs E's complaint. He initially said Interactive didn't need to take any action. He drew a finding based on the information he had in front of him at that time. He said the account had been migrated and was still the same as before, but with a different account number. He said the CTC received by Mrs E covered the time she was with Aberdeen too in the 2023/24 tax year.

Mrs E then explained in response that when Aberdeen announced it was closing her account, she took the opportunity to request a transfer of all her investments and cash held

with Aberdeen to an existing third-party account. Mrs E said Aberdeen didn't transfer 1 of the investments that she held. This error was subject to a separate resolved complaint.

Mrs E said she had no intention to use the interactive account, that her investment had defaulted to. She said Aberdeen communicated to her that it would send out a CTC, on closure, but she did not receive this.

Mrs E said she received dividends from her investments from 7 April 2023 to 20 November 2023 and these were not on the CTC that was sent to her by Interactive. Mrs E listed out the dividends she received in this period. She said the CTC she received was missing 23 payments. Mrs E reiterated that she needed a complete CTC in order to complete her 2023/23 tax return.

The investigator went back to Interactive and asked them about this. Interactive responded and said all of the missing payments Mrs E referred to were in a CTC issued by Aberdeen. It said this was accessible online and she could see the certificate there.

The investigator sent a second view upholding Mrs E's complaint. He said he put what Mrs E had told him to Interactive, and in response it managed to provide the information Mrs E had been requesting over a significant period of time. He said Interactive provided a screenshot of where the documents in question were located on Mrs E's online profile, so it seemed to him that she could have accessed them at any time. He said, either Mrs E couldn't find them, or she didn't have access to her account online.

The investigator concluded that in either scenario that he had described, it was clear Mrs E was seeking help from Interactive about having the information sent to her. He concluded Interactive were able to do this but didn't. He felt it didn't act fairly or reasonable and caused unnecessary distress and inconvenience, so it should pay Mrs E £150.

Interactive was not in agreement with the investigator's second view. It said, at no point did Mrs E confirm that she wanted a CTC from Aberdeen. It said it provided what Mrs E requested which was a CTC from it. Interactive said prior to migration, Mrs E was provided with its brochure which confirmed upon consent, the migration and account set up. It said the Aberdeen statement was uploaded to Mrs E's portfolio. It said it could see no error made by it.

The investigator responded and pointed to a phone call on 12 July 2024, where he said Mrs E had been clear about what she was trying to obtain.

Interactive came back and said it reviewed the same call and reiterated that Mrs E said she wanted a tax certificate for 2023/24 but not an Aberdeen tax certificate. It said it offered to help Mrs E get logged into her online account, but she declined consent, stating the account was closed anyway. It repeated that Mrs E did not ask for an Aberdeen certificate to be sent to her and she did not ask for one in either of the two calls.

Interactive referred to its terms and conditions and said these would have been provided to Mrs E in a brochure at the time her investment was migrated. It said the terms stated where the Aberdeen CTC would have been held. It said once Mrs E did give consent to have an online account, it uploaded the documents, and she would've had access to them.

Because the parties are not in agreement, Mrs E's complaint has been passed to me, an ombudsman, to look into.

## 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 have independently reviewed Mrs E's complaint and have arrived at the same outcome as the investigator, for broadly the same reasons. I will explain why.

Mrs E has been very clear to our service about what the crux of her complaint is. She received a CTC from Interactive, but it only included details of dividends that she received *after* her account had been migrated to it. Mrs E required a CTC for all dividends that she received over the whole tax year. Mrs E has broken that down for our service and has listed out 23 dividends that she received that were not on the Interactive produced CTC.

Interactive explained that Mrs E's account had migrated to it in 2023. It said it was the same account, but just with a different account number. Interactive took over Mrs E's account and also responsibility for it. So, I think it was responsible for providing Mrs E with a CTC for the whole tax year 2023/24, and not just from the point the account was migrated across from Aberdeen.

Interactive has fairly recently, in response to our investigator's view, said that a CTC from Aberdeen that covered the dates Mrs E required was sitting online all along and Mrs E could have gained access to it by logging into her Interactive account. It said a brochure and its term and conditions explained that this information would be there, and Mrs E would have been given this information. I acknowledge what Interactive have said here.

However, it is clear Mrs E was not aware that Aberdeen's CTC was accessible on her account leading up to the point when she first contacted Interactive about her tax certificate on 5 July 2024. I have looked at her circumstances here namely that she didn't actively choose to have her account migrate across, and instead had other intentions about where she wanted her investments to go. I think in the circumstances, although I do acknowledge what Interactive has said about what it provided to Mrs E at the time, it ought to have been ready and on hand to deal with any reasonable enquiries she had if she needed its help about the account. With this being the case, I have gone on to consider whether Interactive treated Mrs E fairly when she sought help from it.

I have listened to all three calls made by Mrs E. There were 2 on 5 July 2024 and then a call between the parties on 12 July 2024. In this final call, Mrs E was joined by her husband, and they were both trying to put across what it was that Mrs E needed to the representative from Interactive. Early on in the call Mrs E's husband stated:

*"We're trying to get the tax certificate for last year from the Aberdeen investment trust share plan buy we've been going round the houses for about a month now."*

The representative then went on to confirm with Mrs E that she would like a tax certificate for 2023/24 sent in the post and she confirmed this was the case. Interactive then asked if Mrs E would like help obtaining access to her account online, to which Mrs E declined as she felt the account was closed.

After hearing this call, I am satisfied Mrs E and her husband made it clear that Mrs E needed a CTC for the whole tax year. It was put across that they needed a tax certificate for the Aberdeen investment trust share plan. It was also made clear towards the end of the call that Mrs E did not have access to her account online as she considered her account closed. She was of the understanding that, once she had received the CTC she needed that she wouldn't then need any further dealings with Interactive.

With what I have concluded in mind, I think on balance Interactive didn't treat Mrs E fairly from this point. It ought to have been aware of what Mrs E wanted and it either at this stage ought to have explained to her that she needed to obtain access to her account online so that she could obtain the information she required, or it ought to have sent the Aberdeen document to her. I think if it had done either of those things, instead of resending to her a document she already had, it would have avoided causing Mrs E the distress and inconvenience of what had happened over the past month and what was to come, with her having to chase matters up.

In addition, Interactive also had other opportunities to intervene and provide the information that Mrs E was seeking. In particular, I have read a letter sent by Mrs E to Interactive on 2 August 2024, where she said, *"I have been trying for some time now to get a tax certificate for the abrdn share plan"*, along with a blunt letter from her dated 11 August 2024, where she stated in large red font and in bold *"I NEED A TAX CERTIFICATE FOR ABRDN SHARE PLAN"*. When I read both of these letters, I think Interactive had an opportunity to respond and send Mrs E the Aberdeen CTC information that it held, but it didn't do so. It wasn't until two more months had passed that, after intervention from our investigator, Interactive sent us the information Mrs E was seeking. It was at this point that the investigator was able to pass this over to her.

Based on my findings given above, I think on balance Interactive made mistakes. It ought to have sent Mrs E the Aberdeen CTC in the post when she requested it on 12 July 2024. I think it ought to have been aware of what she wanted at that stage, after what I have heard in a recording of that call. Interactive also could have intervened on 2 and 11 August 2024 and sent the information Mrs E required at this stage too. It didn't do this on these 3 occasions, and I think by not doing so it has caused Mrs E unnecessary distress and inconvenience. So, I uphold Mrs E's complaint.

The investigator recommended Interactive should pay £150 for this. I think this is a fair amount and so my decision is that Interactive should pay Mrs E £150.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that I uphold Mrs E's complaint. Interactive Investor Trading Limited should pay Mrs E £150. Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs E to accept or reject my decision before 22 April 2025.

Mark Richardson  
**Ombudsman**