

The complaint

Mr C complains about the nature of questions that Santander UK plc (Santander) asked him as part of its Know Your Customer (KYC) checks. He would like an apology and compensation.

What happened

The details of this complaint are well known to both parties so I won't repeat them again here, instead I will focus on giving the reasons for my 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 have reached the following conclusions: -

- I appreciate Mr C's frustration. He was a long-standing customer of Santander's and for him to provide the information required would have required considerable effort on his behalf. Mr C has made the point that other institutions don't ask for the same level of detail as Santander. That may be the case, but it doesn't mean that the information Santander requested was unreasonable. And in this decision, I can only consider Santander's actions not those of other banks.
- Santander has explained it has a legal and regulatory duty to conduct ongoing due diligence on customers known as KYC. Its general terms and conditions, which I have seen, state there are times when it will ask for information including to comply with law or regulation, to keep records up to date and confirm where funds have come from. So, Mr C would have been aware of this requirement.
- I have listened to the phone calls that Mr C had with Santander and have also seen the list of questions put to him. Whilst I appreciate the questions were very specific and detailed ultimately, it's for Santander to decide what level of information to ask for to ensure it meets its KYC requirements. I do appreciate it would have taken Mr C some time to provide the information requested but I don't think that was a reason for Santander to waive or simplify its request.
- Mr C made the point that he could have been dealt with under a different more suitable policy such as one for customers who bank privately. I think that was a decision for Santander to take. As I understand it Mr C didn't bank in a private capacity with Santander so I don't think he could reasonably expect private banking terms and conditions to apply to him.
- I appreciate the inconvenience for Mr C in moving to a different bank. But that was his decision. He could have chosen to provide the information requested and remain with Santander.

- Based on all the information I have seen I don't think Santander's actions were unreasonable. So, I can't therefore ask it to apologise and compensate Mr C as he would like.

My final decision

My final decision is that I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr C to accept or reject my decision before 3 March 2025.

Bridget Makins
Ombudsman