

The complaint

M, a limited company, complains that World First UK Limited didn't ensure that an international payment reached the intended payee.

What happened

M explains that on 1 May 2024 it sent an international payment of US Dollars 2,900 through World First to a client abroad. But that this didn't arrive, and the client's bank has no record of a payment. M doesn't think that World First has done enough to help it and should refund its money.

World First said it hadn't made a mistake. The payment had been made by its bank and it provided messages from the SWIFT payment system about this to M when it responded to the complaint. There had been no response from the beneficiary bank. And a recall of the payment relied on a response from that beneficiary.

Our investigator didn't recommend that the complaint be upheld. He said he thought that World First had made reasonable efforts to trace the payment. And he noted that there had been no response from a correspondent bank used by the beneficiary bank to requests for information about the payment. The terms and conditions of the account stated that World First wouldn't be responsible if a recall of the payment weren't successful. And it had been prevented from recalling the payment due to a lack of response about the payment. Our investigator said that we wouldn't be able to look at what the beneficiary bank or any correspondent for that bank had done here and this was a complaint about World First.

M didn't agree. It said that it was dissatisfied as things were unresolved. M said that its client had repeatedly contacted its bank. And it thought it improbable that messages sent by SWIFT wouldn't have been acted upon. M asked that that it be allowed more time to follow this up with the payment details provided.

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 note that our investigator referred M again to SWIFT messages about this payment provided in the final response letter from World First about this complaint. These confirm that the payment was sent and then chased up. And would be information that M could provide to its client to help it trace these funds abroad.

I don't have further evidence about the payment from M including any details about contact from the beneficiary bank or its correspondent abroad. And there has been no response to any SWIFT messages. I also note that payments to this beneficiary appear to have been sent and received successfully before and after this payment using the same method and details.

There is an expectation that World First make reasonable efforts to trace and or recall a

missing payment. Here I consider on balance that it's done so and had no response. So, I don't find there is anything more it should reasonably do. And I don't have a basis to find that it has made a mistake in processing and sending this payment.

I appreciate what is at stake for M and that the question of what happened to this payment after it was sent isn't resolved. But I'm afraid that for the reasons I've given I won't be requiring World First to do anything further. If M doesn't accept my decision it remains free to pursue this matter in court and subject to any relevant timescales.

My final decision

My decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask M to accept or reject my decision before 28 March 2025.

Michael Crewe
Ombudsman