

The complaint

Ms L complains Conister Bank Limited didn't call her back when she asked for help with an online application.

What happened

In October 2024 Ms L contacted Conister Bank to say she was having problems completing an online application for a fixed rate bond. Ms L requested a call back.

Instead of receiving a call back, Ms L says an agent emailed her asking her to call them. She was very unhappy with this and so complained. In her complaint, Ms L asked Conister Bank for £100 compensation which she said would cover the loss of the interest rate as rates had gone down, her time and frustration and Conister Bank's poor handling of the matter.

Conister Bank looked into Ms L's complaint and apologised for the customer service she'd received. It accepted that she should have received a call back. In addition, Conister Bank explained why Ms L's application wasn't showing as complete – she needed to scroll to the bottom of the page and agree to the terms and conditions. Conister Bank said that Ms L was welcome to re-apply if she wished to do so. Ms L wasn't happy with Conister Bank's response saying it hadn't offered her any compensation. So, she complained to us.

Following our involvement, Conister Bank said it was happy to offer Ms L a fixed term deposit for one year with a 5% interest rate – even though its rates had already dropped to 4.52%. In other words, a deposit on the same terms as the one she'd applied for. In addition, Conister Bank sent us calculations of how much interest Ms L had likely lost – approximately £24 – saying that it hadn't acted unfairly when it had said no to her request for £100 compensation.

Our investigator put Conister Bank's offer to Ms L, but she rejected it saying Conister Bank had had its chance to make an offer when she originally complained. She said that she'd be uneasy now investing with them.

Our investigator looked into Ms L's complaint and said that they thought Conister Bank's offer was fair and reasonable as it would put Ms L back into the position she would have been in. They thought that its sincere apology was sufficient, and that additional compensation wasn't needed. Ms L disagreed, saying that she can't now make use of its offer. She also said that she hadn't been offered compensation for lost interest. Ms L asked for her complaint to be referred to an ombudsman for a decision. Her complaint was, as a result, passed to me.

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.

Conister Bank accepted when Ms L complained that one of its members of staff should have called her back – as she'd requested. It's unfortunate that a member of staff didn't call her

back as it seems the problem she was having with her online application was one that could have easily been resolved. And it's unfortunate Ms L didn't call either – she hasn't said there's any reason why she couldn't have done so other than the obvious one that she was expecting a call back. Shortly after we started investigating, however, I'm satisfied that Conister Bank offer to open a fixed rate bond for Ms L – if she re-applied – on the same terms she would have got had she been able to complete her application in October 2023.

I agree with our investigator that Conister Bank's offer was and is a fair and reasonable one. I also agree that Conister Bank's sincere apology – in conjunction with this offer – was and is a fair and reasonable outcome.

Putting things right

Following our involvement, Conister Bank offered to open a fixed rate bond for Ms L – if she re-applied – on the same terms she would have got had she been able to complete her application in October 2023. I consider that offer – in conjunction with its apology – to be a fair and reasonable outcome. So, that's the award I'm going to make.

My final decision

Conister Bank Limited has already made an offer to settle this complaint and I think this offer is fair in all the circumstances.

So, my decision is that Conister Bank Limited should open a fixed rate bond for Ms L – if she re-applies – on the same terms she would have got had she been able to complete her application in October 2023.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Ms L to accept or reject my decision before 21 February 2025.

Nicolas Atkinson
Ombudsman