

The complaint

Mrs M complains about the actions of Yorkshire Building Society (YBS) after she requested an ISA transfer to another financial services provider who I'll refer to as B. YBS's actions caused Mrs M inconvenience, stress, and lost interest.

What happened

The full details of this complaint are well known to both parties, so I won't repeat them again here. Instead, I'll attempt to recap the key points and focus on giving the reasons for my decision.

In early April 2024, Mrs M started the process of transferring part of her YBS ISA to B, in readiness for its maturity date later that month. Concerned she had not heard updates from YBS, Mrs M chased the matter several times with them by telephone and message but could not get clarity about how long it would take.

Eventually, after more contact, the ISA transfer was completed so Mrs M logged a complaint with YBS about the delay and the impact. YBS investigated the matter and telephoned Mrs M in an attempt to bring the matter to a resolution. Within the call, whilst YBS acknowledged some failings made by B, they upheld the complaint, apologising for their failings and the poor customer experience they had delivered. They ended their call with an offer of £250 compensation, plus the agreement to backdate interest to the appropriate date. Mrs M agreed to the backdate, and whilst YBS credited the compensation, Mrs M asked for time to think about it as she considered a more appropriate figure to be £500.

Mrs M then brought her complaint to our service so our investigator looked into it. Our investigator then issued their view in which they did not think YBS needed to do anymore. They commented that YBS did make the transfer within the ISA transfer guideline period of 15 working days, and had backdated interest. Finally, they thought that YBS's compensation figure of £250 was fair.

Mrs M responded and rejected our investigator's view saying she disagreed with some aspects, and the compensation figure was not sufficient in view of the impact. Accordingly, the complaint has been passed to me for review.

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 looked at the information YBS has supplied to see if it has acted within its terms and conditions, and to see if it has treated Mrs M fairly.

If I don't mention any specific point, it's not because I failed to take it on board and think about it, but because I don't think I need to comment on it to reach what I think is a fair and reasonable outcome. No discourtesy is intended by me in taking this approach. I do also want to acknowledge the thoroughness of the view that our investigator issued and consequently, I see no benefit in going into detail about certain concerns, as this has been done more than competently in the view.

What's not in question is that errors were made, including poor communication, delays, and unresponsiveness, which all conspired to cause uncertainty and stress. I'm pleased to see that YBS have apologised, taken ownership, and attempted to award suitable compensation. In particular, I recognise the honesty and empathy they showed within their complaint resolution telephone call in May.

Regarding their errors, whilst I cannot force YBS to do so, I do hope that they see this complaint as an opportunity to review what's happened here, and take the relevant learning points.

One point I wanted to address which I note Mrs M mentioned on several occasions, is around an ISA transfer that her husband instructed, in that his transfer was completed very quickly in comparison to that of Mrs M's. I acknowledge this may have been the case, however I can't pass comment on a transfer of another customer, plus it's not uncommon to see very similar ISA transfer instructions take different timescales to complete.

Another point I noted was Mrs M's belief that the ISA transfer process, and 15 working day timescale began around 2nd April 2024 but as YBS advised, Mrs M's ISA didn't mature until 12th April 2024 meaning the process could not start until after this date.

Mrs M also disputes information around the correspondence she received from YBS which indicated she could action the transfer manually, which of course would lose the ISA status of the funds. From listening to the complaint resolution call from YBS, I note they addressed this concern in that call. So I don't feel I need to address this any further.

Mrs M has mentioned lost interest in terms of it being an aspect that remains outstanding. But from the evidence I've seen from YBS, I'm not persuaded this is the case so it's not something I can address.

Moving on to compensation, as an informal dispute resolution service, we consider awards according to what we consider to be a fair and reasonable reflection of the impact the distress and inconvenience has had upon the consumer. And so, what I wanted to understand was the impact on Mrs M, whether their offer is considered as fair, and also look at it through the lens of this service's compensation guidelines and similar cases. In view of what has happened, I agree with the investigator that YBS's figure of £250 is appropriate in view of their errors and the impact. As YBS did acknowledge, their payment is for their failings, and knowing that Mrs M has pursued a separate complaint with B, I would expect that company to work on the same basis.

In conclusion, acknowledging YBS's errors and their subsequent actions, other than compensation, I cannot require it to take any further action.

My final decision

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

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs M to accept or reject my decision before 16 April 2025.

Chris Blamires
Ombudsman