

The complaint

Mr I complains Santander UK plc (Santander) refused to pay him a switch incentive payment.

What happened

Mr I says in late May 2024 he applied online to switch his bank account to Santander and requested the switch date to be 29 July 2024, so it met the terms and conditions of the incentive payment that the switch would be completed in the 60-day time frame.

Mr I says he contacted Santander in October 2024 as he hadn't received the £175 incentive payment and was told he hadn't qualified for the payment as his current account switch hadn't formally completed until 6 August 2024. Mr I says it wasn't his fault the bank account switch took seven days and Santander are hiding behind the terms of the switch.

Santander says Mr I didn't meet the switch incentive criteria as the switch needed to have been completed within 60 days from the account application of 31 May 2024, including the deposit of £1,500 and the setting up of two direct debits. Santander says it takes seven days for the switch to be completed and the account was successfully completed on 6 August 2024.

Additionally, Santander says Mr I's first deposit by way of salary payment wasn't made until late August 2024.

Mr I wasn't happy with Santander's response and referred the matter to this service.

The investigator looked at all the available information and initially upheld the complaint as she couldn't see where Santander could evidence the current account switch process took seven days to complete. However, Santander provided details of this from its website and the investigator agreed that it did make clear the transfer process would take seven days and therefore didn't uphold the complaint.

Mr I didn't agree with the investigator's view and asked for the matter to be referred to an ombudsman for a final 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 won't be upholding this complaint and I will explain how I have come to my decision.

I can understand it would be frustrating and upsetting for Mr I to believe he had properly instructed Santander to switch his bank account to qualify for the incentive payment.

When looking at this complaint I will consider if Santander acted unreasonably when it refused to pay Mr I the switch incentive payment.

Mr I's complaint centres around the fact he instructed Santander to switch his bank account on 29 July 2024, so it fell within the 60-day time frame allowed, and the switch incentive payment of £175 could be made.

I understand the points Mr I has made and while I do have some sympathy here, having seen all the information relating to how the switch incentive process operates – unfortunately I can't say Santander have made a mistake here.

I say this because firstly on Santander's website when applying online for its switching service and incentive, it does explain it would use the Current Account Switch Guarantee (CASG) and under the heading of "*What happens when I switch?*", it makes clear the switch process takes seven days.

So, while on 31 May 2024 Mr I did ask for the switch start date to be 29 July 2024, this didn't take into account the seven days Santander would need to complete the CASG which is a set process most banks use to transfer bank accounts between one another. As a result, Mr I didn't fund the account with his salary until late August 2024 which fell beyond the incentive period.

So, it's fair to say here while Mr I may not agree, although he did set the start date for the switch for 29 July 2024, that didn't allow Santander to complete the switch process within the 60-day window for the incentive payment to be made.

While Mr I will be disappointed with my decision, I won't be asking anymore of Santander.

My final decision

My final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr I to accept or reject my decision before 25 February 2025.

Barry White
Ombudsman