

The complaint

Miss D is complaining on behalf of her late father's estate that Clydesdale Bank Plc trading as Virgin Money hasn't paid funds claimed.

What happened

Mr D had an account with Clydesdale Bank in 1997. Sadly, he passed away in 2012.

In 2024 Miss D contacted Virgin Money to say that she had evidence her late father had an account with them that he hadn't closed. She asked Virgin Money to pay the funds in the account into her late father's estate. Virgin Money says it searched all of its systems for details of Miss D's late father but was unable to locate any information about him or funds owing to him. In the circumstances, Virgin Money concluded that the account must have been closed more than seven years earlier. Miss D ultimately complained to us.

One of our investigators looked into this complaint and said that they didn't think Virgin Money had acted unfairly.

Miss D disagreed with our investigator saying her evidence proved her father had an account with Clydesdale Bank in 1997 and Virgin Money couldn't blame the digitisation of records for not being able to find details of it. She said that the evidence showed £5,000 had been deposited into the account. She asked for this complaint to be referred to an ombudsman for a decision. This 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.

Having reviewed this file, I can see that Miss D found a paying in book for her late father showing he deposited £5,000 in Clydesdale Bank in 1997. She hasn't found any statements showing what happened to that money after it was deposited. Her late father passed away over 10 years ago and it seems her mother has sadly passed away relatively recently too.

I can, given what I've just said, understand why she went to her local branch to ask about what she thought was a dormant account. I can also understand why the branch members might have said that the proceeds of the account would have been paid to charity by now given how long ago her father passed away as that can happen with dormant accounts. The evidence Miss D has supplied doesn't, however, prove that her father had a dormant account before he passed away. All it proves is that he had an account in 1997 into which he deposited £5,000.

I can see that Virgin Money took all the details Miss D supplied and carried out all the searches I would have expected it to. Those searches established that Virgin Money had no details about Mr D or the account in question on any of its systems and, in a case like this, that means the account was more likely than not closed many years ago.

I can understand why Miss D feels funds that belonged to her late father have been withheld. Based on everything I've seen, however, I'm satisfied that the account that she's proved existed in 1997 was more likely than not closed many years ago and that the proceeds haven't been donated to charity. That means Virgin Money doesn't need to do more.

My final decision

My final decision is that I'm not upholding this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask the estate of Mr D to accept or reject my decision before 7 March 2025.

Nicolas Atkinson
Ombudsman