

The complaint

Mr B complains about issues he encountered when dealing with Equiniti Financial Services Limited when trying to sell some shares.

What happened

In August 2024 Mr B complained to Equiniti as he was frustrated with how he had been treated when trying to sell some shares. He was unhappy with issues around Identification Documents (ID) he had been asked to provide and at that time he had also not received the proceeds from the share sale.

Equiniti looked into the issues but didn't uphold the complaint. They said the ID requirements were part of the share sale process and this was outlined in the terms and conditions of the account. They went on to say that the shares would soon be bought back if the ID requirements were not met. And that's what happened soon after.

Remaining unhappy Mr B brought his complaint to our service where one of our Investigators looked into what happened. After considering all the information, including listening to the relevant telephone calls, they thought that overall Equiniti had acted fairly and reasonably when dealing with Mr B. They thought the ID requirements were clear in the terms and conditions and also that Equiniti acted fairly when rejecting the passport that was provided as it didn't meet their requirements.

Mr B disagreed so the matter has come to me for a 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.

Mr B has provided a lot of information about this complaint and it's clear to me how strongly he feels about what happened. I want to assure Mr B that I've read and considered everything that has been provided even if I don't mention it all in detail. I've summarised some of what happened which reflects the informal nature of our service.

Our Investigator provided a timeline of events to both parties as part of their investigation and I'm satisfied this is a fair reflection of what happened. Since what happened isn't really being disputed by either party, I won't repeat all the detail again here.

The requirement to provide ID when selling shares is set out in the account terms and conditions. And Mr B was made aware of this in a phone call when he requested to sell the shares and the trade was initiated. So I think Equiniti acted fairly when asking Mr B to provide the relevant ID.

There were some issues and delays with Equiniti receiving the ID as an incorrect email address was used when it was submitted, which wasn't their fault. When a copy of the passport was received it didn't meet the requirements as not all of the information was

clearly displayed. This meant it was rejected by Equiniti.

Looking at what happened with the ID I don't think Equiniti were responsible for any delays. And I'm also satisfied they acted reasonably when rejecting the copy of the passport as it didn't meet their requirements.

Having considered the telephone calls between Mr B and Equiniti I can see that the situation was frustrating for him. However I think it's right that Equiniti verify the identity of an account holder each time a call is made to them this is to protect data security.

Lastly I've considered the buyback of the shares. Because Equiniti didn't receive acceptable ID they bought back, or repurchased, the same number of shares that were initially sold. This meant Mr B was put back in the position he was in before the sale.

The repurchase of the shares took place almost six weeks after the sale had first been requested. I think this was sufficient time to wait for acceptable ID to be provided. It wouldn't be right for Equiniti to wait a longer period before essentially reversing the transaction. It turned out that when acceptable ID was provided the repurchase was already underway and couldn't be stopped. This was unfortunate timing and caused extra frustration for Mr B. However, I don't think any errors were made when actioning the buyback after waiting for such a length of time for the ID to be provided.

I can see why Mr B is frustrated with the entire situation but I don't think there were any errors made by Equiniti.

After carefully considering everything that happened, I'm satisfied Equiniti acted fairly and reasonably when dealing with Mr B so I won't be asking them to take any further action.

My final decision

For the reasons I've explained above, my decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr B to accept or reject my decision before 3 April 2025.

Warren Wilson
Ombudsman