

## **The complaint**

Mr M complains broadly that the service he receives from HSBC UK Bank Plc has declined significantly over time. He holds the bank responsible for his resulting losses, and the distress and inconvenience its actions have caused him.

## **What happened**

The facts of this case are well known to both parties, but in brief summary:

- Mr M is a longstanding customer of HSBC. He used to benefit from regular contact with a relationship manager who'd proactively assist with his day-to-day needs.
- HSBC withdrew the role of relationship manager. And with his needs not being met proactively, he became concerned he was missing opportunities to optimise his banking arrangements, through things like savings rates and ISA allowances.
- He made a series of complaints to HSBC about this. And he also complained more broadly that, relative to his expectations, the bank's general standards of customer service had declined considerably over time.
- HSBC issued various responses to the concerns Mr M raised. It paid him £500 in recognition of the distress and inconvenience caused by the removal of his relationship manager. It offered further apologies for not always responding to his complaints as promptly as it would've liked to. And it subsequently told him that managing his ISA subscriptions and savings rates was a matter he'd be expected to manage himself.

Mr M remained dissatisfied with HSBC, so he referred his complaint to our service.

HSBC failed to furnish our service with the full history of its correspondence with Mr M. Specifically, it completely omitted it'd already paid him £500 to apologise for the distress and inconvenience its actions had caused. As a result of this, our investigator concluded his complaint should be upheld. In summary, they found that:

- As Mr M had argued, the level of service HSBC was prepared to offer him had indeed seemed to decline over time.
- This was linked to the cessation of the relationship manager role, which our investigator wasn't satisfied had been communicated properly to Mr M.
- To compensate for this, HSBC should offer Mr M £200 to address the impact its poor service had had on him.
- With that being said, the investigator found no evidence in any of the bank's terms and conditions which supported Mr M's expectations of the level of service he was demanding from the bank.
- The investigator concluded that what Mr M seemed to want was a wealth management service, which HSBC provided at a cost, and which Mr M had previously declined an invitation to enroll in.

- Finally, they suggested that with his expectations now adjusted, Mr M should consider whether HSBC was equipped to meet his banking and investment needs. And that should he require an enhanced level of service, he'd either need to enroll in the bank's wealth management service or take advice elsewhere.

HSBC rejected our investigator's findings. The bank felt it was unfair to require it to pay compensation over and above the £500 it'd failed to mention had already been paid. With this in mind, our investigator revisited their findings and concluded it wouldn't be fair or reasonable to require HSBC to pay any further compensation. Considering the facts of Mr M's quite broadly, they were persuaded that £500 would sufficiently address any impact the bank's actions had caused.

In addition to this, the investigator further expanded their conclusions and found that the withdrawal of the relationship manager role was a legitimate use of HSBC's commercial discretion. And that to benefit from a comparable level of service in the future, Mr M would likely need to enlist the services of a wealth manager.

Mr M replied to our investigator's assessment to say he'd never received the £500, and was unaware the bank had ever offered him this amount. Time was spent liaising back and forth between HSBC and Mr M establishing whether in fact the £500 had been paid as the bank suggested. The bank subsequently provided evidence to show the payment credited Mr M's HSBC account in early 2024. Mr M remained dissatisfied, so the matter has been referred 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.

Having done so I've reached the same conclusions as our investigator, for largely the same reasons. In summary, I've found that:

- There have been occasions where the level of service provided by HSBC has fallen below what I consider to be fair and reasonable.
- In particular, the withdrawal of the relationship manager role and the reframing of the bank's relationship with Mr M in the wake of this, was not well handled in my opinion.
- It's my view that the bank's offer of £500, which I'm satisfied has been paid, is sufficient to address the impact of the poor service Mr M has complained about.
- More broadly, I don't find it's unfair or unreasonable of the bank to have withdrawn some of the services it used to provide. Such decisions fall within the bank's legitimate commercial discretion.
- The terms and conditions which underpin Mr M's relationship with the bank would not compel HSBC to continue offering the services it's decided to withdraw. And fundamentally, these terms set the tone of what Mr M can reasonably expect from the bank on an ongoing basis.
- I don't find the bank's responsible for any losses Mr M has made with respect to his ISA or his cash savings. There is no agreement in place for the bank to proactively manage Mr M's investments in the way he expects it to.
- Like our investigator, it strikes me that what Mr M appears to want from the bank is a wealth management service. This is something HSBC will offer him, at a cost. And if he feels the bank is unable to meet his expectations more generally, he's free to consider whether another firm would be capable of doing so.

For all of the reasons given above, I do not uphold Mr M's complaint. I'm satisfied the bank's already paid him an offer which in my opinion fairly and reasonably addresses the impact of its actions.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that I do not uphold Mr M's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr M to accept or reject my decision before 24 July 2025.

Marcus Moore  
**Ombudsman**