

## **The complaint**

Mr F complains as executor of the estate of Mrs C, that Santander UK Plc has failed to trace funds belonging to Mrs C.

## **What happened**

Mrs C died in January 2024. As her executor, Mr F found papers relating to an account with B, a former building society taken over by Santander. A statement dated August 2007 showed a balance of over £2,500. The account showed an address where Mrs C had lived up until 2009.

Mr F enquired of Santander concerning any funds going to Mrs C from that account. He was initially told that no account was linked to that address. Santander rechecked its records and said that the account in question had been converted to a Santander account. The 2007 statement was the latest record existing of the account and it had no further records. It explained that its records only went back seven years. It had carried out a thorough search, and as it could trace no details of that account number in its systems or its archives, that indicated that the account was closed.

On referral to the Financial Ombudsman Service, our Investigator said that as there's no evidence proving the account's continued existence or improper closure, we do not have sufficient grounds to require Santander to carry out further searches.

Mr F was not happy with this and the matter has been passed to me for an Ombudsman's consideration.

## **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.

First of all, Santander is correct in saying that isn't required to keep records going back more than seven years. In this case the latest date we know of any monies in the account is August 2007. I understand that Santander took over all of B's old accounts in September 2008, and as it has said this account was taken over, that is the latest date that we know of the account's existence.

We would expect Santander to carry out a thorough check of its records. And it says it searched with the customer's surname, and date of birth, as well as the customer's surname and postcode and was unable to locate a customer profile. Following receipt of the statement, it couldn't see any further account history.

If there is a balance on the account and it is closed due to being made dormant, there would be a record of it, and the funds would be retained. Banks would be required to take specific steps when making an account dormant. But as there appears to be no trace of the account, it seems likely that it was closed sometime after September 2008.

If I were to make a direction against Santander requiring it to do something, I'd need to be satisfied that it'd either made an error or not taken adequate steps to locate information about the account. But Santander appears to have carried out a thorough search, which is what we would expect it to do. There are no further searches that I could think of that Santander could now do.

So whilst I understand Mr F's disappointment, I can't uphold his complaint.

**My final decision**

I don't uphold the complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask the estate of Mrs C to accept or reject my decision before 12 June 2025.

Ray Lawley  
**Ombudsman**