

The complaint

Mr H complains that Computershare Investor Services Plc (“Computershare”) doesn’t provide a telephone share dealing service.

What happened

Mr H holds a share dealing account with Computershare. On 10 February 2025, Mr H called Computershare as he was unhappy that it was unable to offer a telephone share dealing service. Computershare agreed to send Mr H a postal form and this was arranged that day. Mr H raised a complaint and asked if Computershare would compensate him for any drop in the share price while processing his trade.

Computershare considered Mr H’s complaint but didn’t uphold it. It apologised that it couldn’t accommodate his wishes and offer him a telephone dealing service but explained that he was able to use its postal share dealing service, which would mean he would get the share price on the trade date, and that it wouldn’t cover any price differences. It also noted that a postal form had been sent as requested.

Mr H remained unhappy with Computershare’s response and raised his concerns again, including how the call was dealt with. Computershare informed Mr H that it had reviewed all his correspondence and calls and noted that, whilst the call took 23 minutes, the call handler he spoke to was helpful and polite.

Mr H remained unhappy with Computershare’s response and so he referred his complaint to this service for an independent review.

Having referred the complaint, Computershare informed our service that Mr H had returned the required postal share dealing forms, which it received on 14 February 2025. The trade was then placed on 20 February 2025 and settled on 24 February 2025.

One of our investigators considered Mr H’s complaint but didn’t uphold it. In summary, they said:

- There’s no obligation on Computershare to provide a telephone dealing service, and the terms and conditions of its share dealing sales service confirms it won’t accept instructions given by telephone.
- The decision not to offer a telephone dealing service after taking its dealing service in house is a commercial decision it was entitled to make and not one our service has the power to interfere with.
- When Mr H telephoned on 10 February 2025, Computershare explained there were two ways to sell his shares – online or by postal form. The call handler also Mr H could download the form from its website, or it could post it to him.
- Dealing by post inherently takes longer but they were satisfied Computershare offered him a reasonable alternative to sell your shares faster by doing so online.
- They were satisfied the call handler gave an estimated timeframe of how long the trade would take, including the postal time, the time to process his instruction and the time for the sale proceeds to be sent to him.

- They reviewed the evidence of the time taken to make the trade and were satisfied that Computershare didn't cause any unnecessary delay.

Mr H didn't accept the investigator's findings and so his complaint has been passed to me to decide.

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.

Whilst I appreciate that this will likely come as a disappointment to Mr H, I'm in agreement with our investigator and for largely the same reasons. As such, I'm not upholding Mr H's complaint and whilst I don't think I can add a great deal more beyond what our investigator has already set out, I'll explain why below.

I appreciate Mr H's disappointment that Computershare are unable to provide a telephone share dealing service for him. Clearly, this is Mr H's preferred method for him provide trade instructions. However, it's important for me to say, Computershare's decision to not provide such a service is a commercial decision for Computershare alone. It's therefore not within the remit of this service to interfere with business decisions of this nature. From what I've see, it appears that Computershare have taken reasonable steps to try and limit the impact of that decision on their consumers by providing alternative ways to provide instructions, such as online or by post. So persuaded Computershare is treating its consumers, such as Mr H, fairly by allowing alternative ways to trade.

I also note that Computershare made Mr H aware that there wouldn't be a telephone share dealing service available in the key information documentation provided to him. This explained:

"We will only accept instructions on the Share Dealing Form. We will not accept instructions given by fax, telephone or on a photocopied form."

Having listened to the call Mr H had with Computershare on 10 February 2025, I'm satisfied the call handler explained this to him and provided clear and accurate information on how he could proceed with his trade. As such, I have no concerns with the way in which Computershare communicated with Mr H regarding it's lack of telephone share dealing service.

I'm also satisfied, having looked carefully at the evidence provided, that it acted upon Mr H's instructions in a timely manner, and he's not suffered any quantifiable financial loss as a result. As such, I'm satisfied Computershare has treated Mr H fairly in the circumstances of his complaint.

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 H to accept or reject my decision before 13 August 2025.

Ben Waites
Ombudsman