

The complaint

Mr E complains that HSBC UK Bank Plc delayed in transferring the balance on his account to him and in answering his complaint.

What happened

On 1 November 2024 Mr E contacted HSBC on its online chat service as he wanted the balance on his savings account, of £1.54, to be transferred to his credit card so that his account could be closed. He was told this couldn't be done on the chat and to request a transfer by phone to another account. He didn't want the inconvenience of this for such a small amount so he asked to log a complaint. He heard nothing further and chased up the matter on 22 November when he was told the complaint had been logged. Unfortunately this referred to a previous complaint and Mr E's complaint wasn't actioned.

Mr E contacted HSBC again on 4 January 2025, pointing out that more than 8 weeks had expired since he had raised his complaint. He was again assured that the matter was being looked into. Unfortunately nothing further happened and he contacted HSBC again on 18 February through an online review website. HSBC responded the next day and advised that it had transferred £1.54 to his account and paid £250 compensation.

Mr E said that, having already raised his complaint with the Financial Ombudsman Service he had accepted the £250, but wanted us to say whether that was reasonable. He also said that he had contacted the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) about the matter.

Our Investigator thought that the compensation paid was fair and reasonable to reflect the errors in HSBC's service.

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.

The Financial Ombudsman Service is set up to resolve complaints with minimum formality. I mean no discourtesy to Mr E but I should advise him that although I've considered everything he's said, I'm not required to cover every point of complaint. Our rules allow me to take this approach.

With regard to Mr E's initial point, whilst I recognise the amount he wanted transferred was very small, we often find that online chat advisers don't have the authority to initiate transfers. And as that appears to be part of HSBC's process, I can't criticise HSBC for not transferring the money in the first place.

The purpose of the FCA's rule that businesses must respond to a complaint within 8 weeks is so that, if no response is made in that time, the consumer can then refer the matter to us. And although we don't have the power to punish or fine the business, we can take into

account when considering compensation that the rule was breached.

In this case, HSBC clearly should have logged the complaint in the first place and it appears that there was confusion over the fact that Mr E had made a recent previous complaint. And I see that HSBC had several opportunities to correct the position, and only did so when Mr E contacted it through the review website.

As regards compensation, Mr E was clearly upset that HSBC wasn't dealing with his complaint. He hasn't made any financial loss and I think that the £250 paid was more than fair in the circumstances of this matter. I won't therefore be requiring HSBC to take any other action.

My final decision

As HSBC has already paid a reasonable amount of compensation I won't uphold the complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr E to accept or reject my decision before 16 July 2025.

Ray Lawley
Ombudsman