

The complaint

This complaint is for a limited company (R). But the complaint was brought by Ms H so for ease I will refer to her as much as possible throughout.

Ms H is unhappy with Barclays Bank UK Plc.

Ms H referred to the appalling experience her and her sister Ms S faced while attempting to arrange takeover of their late father's business banking affairs with Barclays.

What happened

Ms H said her late father had been a long standing and loyal Barclays customer. Yet she said she felt his legacy had been treated with a *"complete lack of dignity following his passing."*

Ms H produced a timeline of events starting with initial efforts to set up a mandate by Ms S to deal with the business accounts with Barclays on 22 January 2025. The mandate arrangements couldn't be concluded until 12 February.

Ms H said Barclays claimed Ms S didn't have the right identification documents on the first visit, so she decided to be the sole person dealing with the issue to try and get it resolved as quickly as possible. Ms H said even though Ms S didn't have the right documents she still spent more than 2.5 hours in discussion with the Barclays Mandate Team trying to get this resolved.

Ms H said on the same day she herself set up a personal bank account with Barclays having had previous experience with Barclays mandate changes. She hoped this would verify her identity and ensure her identification documents were acceptable to help avoid delays and speed up the process.

Ms H said when she made contact again on 30 January to speak to the Mandate Team she was passed around between four different Barclays staff in four different departments. Ms H was able to give the staff names, and the departments were Mandate Team, Bereavement, Limited Companies, and the Business Team. The fourth member of staff told Ms H he couldn't see any of her details, but he could find a copy of Ms S's passport. He said if Ms S called in it might be able to progress the matter.

Ms H took Barclays advice and Ms S did call Barclays that same day. She spoke to six people and was passed back and forward between these departments - Bereavement, Mandate, Business Support, Bereavement, Mandate, Bereavement. Again, Ms H has a record of all the names of the various colleagues that were involved from Barclays. Despite speaking to all of these different departments and people Ms S was told nothing could be done.

Ms H rang the Mandate Team again on 3 February and spoke to two staff over two hours attempting to resolve the matter. Ms H completed new mandate forms for just herself and

Ms S signed the required section and Ms H sent these the next day by recorded delivery to Barclays.

The next day once Ms H had confirmation the letter had been delivered she spoke to the Mandate Team again, but she was cut off and called back.

On 5 February Ms H rang the Mandate Team and was told the mandate was in review and that fast-tracking was available with a 24-48 hour timescale for resolution.

On 7 February Ms H rang and was told some questions had arisen and these were holding up the change of the mandate. Ms H was upset that nobody had contacted her to let her know this.

Ms H said despite being told Ms S didn't need to provide further details Barclays then suddenly changed its mind and insisted that she had to. Barclays said Ms S should remove herself as a director from the company mandate records. Ms H said her sister and her were appalled and upset by this "*insensitive request*" in view of the circumstances. Ms H also noted that given that company records are public this could have serious reputational consequences. But neither felt they were given any choice, and feeling pressured into doing so Ms S resigned. This was visible on the public Companies House records almost instantly said Ms H.

After this on 7 February Ms H spoke again with Barclays who now said now Ms S had resigned it could fast track the mandate within 24-48 hours.

Ms H called again 10 February and was told there was no progress.

Ms H called again 12 February and was told by the Mandate Team there was another issue. Barclays said this time the problem was the correspondence address. Ms H said she was told despite the correct address on Companies House and the updated mandate already being provided she now needed to fill out another form.

Ms H said she requested an upload link but the staff member she was dealing with appeared completely unaware this was possible. Eventually this was done, and Ms H completed and returned the extra form within 10 minutes.

The following day Ms H called and was told to wait another 24 hours.

Barclays offered and paid £100 compensation. It apologised and passed on its condolences.

It wouldn't offer any compensation for consequential losses the business may have incurred during the period. It said its award was only designed to deal with any impact the problem had on the customer. But it also said as the customer is a business it couldn't take into account personal impact. There's no further comment on whether or not R has produced detailed losses to Barclays to make an actual consequential loss claim.

It contacted senior staff in the Mandate Team to understand Ms H's mandate change journey and where errors might have happened. It said it couldn't take all the blame and said it had been proactive with its engagement. It said mandate forms had been completed incorrectly and had missing information.

Barclays did accept it could have reviewed matters sooner, and when Ms H went to the branch it shouldn't have said the forms were completed correctly.

It said the conversation about removing Ms S from the list of directors was with best intentions and it hadn't made an error when it suggested this.

As the matter couldn't be resolved Ms H brought the complaint to this service.

Our investigator upheld the complaint. She said Barclays had made the matter extremely stressful for Ms H and Ms S, particularly after they had recently lost their father. She said Barclays told her a normal timescale from the mandate forms being completed correctly was 14 days. Our investigator accepted that initially Ms S didn't produce the correct identification. She didn't think branch staff would be particularly knowledgeable about complicated mandates, so it was down to the Mandate Team to confirm if these were completed correctly. Our investigator said even though the form was scanned on 27 January it didn't show on the Mandate Teams system until 3 February, a whole week later. She said this shouldn't have taken so long. And regarding removing Ms S as a director she felt this was an attempt to be helpful by Barclays to speed up the process. Our investigator thought overall the process should have run more smoothly. She also accepted Ms H had definitely visited the branch despite Barclays being unclear on this. In conclusion in view of the inconvenience caused she said Barclays should pay a further £150 as compensation for this on top of the £100 it had already paid.

Barclays didn't accept this and asked for the complaint to be passed to an ombudsman for a final 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.

Ms H said what should have been a straightforward transition turned into a traumatic ordeal. Her and her sister faced various conflicting information and had to speak with more than 20 Barclays staff over the period. She said there was a complete lack of clear guidance despite continuously pointing out how urgent this was for the business and its smooth running. Ms H said R was unable to pay suppliers or trade. She said this created losses of over £20,000 during this short period. I think such losses need to be detailed to Barclays for it to consider.

Ms H said Ms S had presented an out of date passport, a driving licence, and a birth certificate when she tried to start the process. She said she found it hard to believe Barclays had no alternative process in place to resolve issues like these. Ms H said Ms S wasn't told she could come back with different identification another time either. She said Barclays appeared to constantly shift its requirements during the mandating process.

Although I understand Ms H's point about having another identification process, I accept Barclays has a set approach to identification documents. I think that's Barclays choice and I've no reason to question that.

Ms H said there was a lack of urgency, care, and compassion from Barclays. As there wasn't a dedicated handler, she and her sister had to repeatedly go over their personal details about themselves and their late father. Ms H said their treatment had been unacceptable.

Ms H felt Barclays were dismissive of the emotional stress it had caused. She didn't accept that after investigating Barclays felt £100 was a fair reflection of what they had been through.

Ms H was also upset by the inference that her detailed timeline of events wasn't accepted by Barclays including the branch visits. She felt Barclays were brushing off legitimate concerns.

Barclays again stated the forms had been incorrectly completed and required further and amended information. It said this caused a delay and that it followed its process.

Barclays confirmed the mandate completed on 12 February. It didn't have any records of the customer visit to the branch. But on the balance of probabilities, it accepted the failings and paid the £100. It said this was the correct outcome. But even though I accept what Barclays say about the updated mandate applying from that date, it's clear when Ms H contacted Barclays on that day it wasn't able to confirm this to her. I think that's poor service.

Barclays said it was unable to confirm if Ms S completed the forms on 22 January as the were not dates on the forms. It said the date stamp in branch was for 24 January and scanning date was 27 January, but it didn't arrive with the Mandate Team until 3 February. Barclays said there were issues around adding Ms S as she wasn't listed at Companies House until 9 March 2025. But I'm not sure how this is key as it said itself the mandate was running from 12 February.

Barclays made many other points, but I think many of them rather missed the point being made by Ms H. Barclays maintain it followed its process, but I'm not convinced. If Barclays did follow its process correctly it would have been able to highlight to Ms H and Ms S when they made any errors and how to put these right.

If Barclays followed its process I don't understand why it would have taken a week for details scanned into a system to pass between departments.

Barclays suggest *"the amount of times the customer call the increased likelihood they will talk to a broader population of people."* In principle there's nothing wrong with such a point. But that doesn't feel like a fair or reasonable point for Barclays to make here. Ms H and Ms S spoke to multiple people in many departments during two calls. That is a very small number of calls to talk to so many different people and departments.

Barclays said its bereavement team *"is a non-customer facing team."* It said call handlers in its telephony team wouldn't be able to connect a customer call with the actual case handler as this isn't part of the banking process.

I accept and understand the point Barclays make about errors on the mandate. But it's clear that Ms H and Ms S tried to continually engage with Barclays to get the processes moving and the details right. I don't get the feeling Barclays were as proactive as it said it was, and I don't see how it can claim it just followed its process. If there was a case handler dealing with this within the bereavement team as Barclays suggest then why didn't they intervene with colleagues to help put things right. And if Barclays had been proactive then the timeline wouldn't show Ms H and Ms S as making all the phone calls to Barclays.

I think Ms H and Ms S were clear on the need to resolve the issues quickly and they attempted in many ways to complete the mandate arrangements. Making Ms H the sole person, removing Ms S as a director, taking the forms into a branch, the lengthy calls, doing more forms, the request for the upload link. It seems to me Ms H and Ms S were making all the effort here and getting little support from Barclays.

I accept that all the attempts made by Ms H and Ms S to get the mandate resolved made the process quite traumatic for them at a time when they would have been vulnerable in the first place. In some ways I think Barclays did try to help and in other ways it just made matters worse.

I accept Barclays point that the limited company can't have an award made to it. But it is disappointing in this complaint that Barclays has maintained the line that it followed process

and didn't get anything wrong when individuals have clearly been impacted by the issues that have arisen due to Barclays processes.

Ms H and Ms S were dealing with the unexpected loss of their father, trying to keep a business running and satisfy Barclays requirements. I think Barclays could and should have offered more support around the calls, the forms, the requests for help and the obvious issues as these occurred throughout the mandate change. I think Barclays needs to pay a further £150 on top of the £100 it has already paid as compensation for the issues it caused here.

Putting things right

- Pay a further £150 compensation.

My final decision

I uphold this complaint.

I require Barclays Bank UK Plc to:

- Pay a further £150 compensation.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask R to accept or reject my decision before 17 October 2025.

John Quinlan
Ombudsman