

## **The complaint**

Mr L and Mrs L are unhappy that Tandem Home Loans Ltd sent their personal information to an e-mail address that wasn't theirs. They say this is severe breach of GDPR rules and has caused significant issues for them.

## **What happened**

Mr L and Mrs L approached Tandem Home Loans Ltd (THLL) for a second charge loan secured on their property. The loan was intended partly for debt consolidation and partly to fund home improvements. THLL sent information including the Mortgage Offer separately to Mr L and Mrs L.

Mr L received the information, however due to human error Mrs L's e-mail address had been incorrectly recorded. The information intended for her was instead sent to a different e-mail address, one which THLL said appeared to be a legitimate/live e-mail address. THLL's process was for the e-mail to be password protected, but due to a technical issue, it wasn't.

Mr L and Mrs L complained to THLL. They said the data breach was unacceptable and that Mr L was going to need to change his banking details and had opened another bank account. They said there would be an impact on Mr L's credit file.

THLL upheld the complaint, acknowledging that it had made an error. It said it had sent an e-mail to the address where the information had been sent in error, to request the information be deleted in order to mitigate any potential issues. But that it hadn't received any response. In recognition of the error and the knock-on impact, it offered £500 to resolve the complaint.

Mr L and Mrs L didn't think this was enough compensation and referred the complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service. When referring the complaint, they said they'd needed to chase THLL for a response to the complaint months after they'd initially raised the issue.

An Investigator here reached an outcome on the case. In summary, they said THLL had taken steps to try to put things right. They said they thought the offer of compensation was fair and in line with our approach to compensation awards. Mr L and Mrs L disagreed and asked for the case to be escalated to an Ombudsman. It's 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.

Having done so, I've reached the same overall outcome as the Investigator and for broadly the same reasons. Before I explain why, I note Mr L and Mrs L have raised concerns about needing to chase THLL in December 2024 for a response to their complaint. Complaint handling is not, in isolation, an activity that falls within my remit to consider. Notwithstanding this, it appears that THLL issued a final response letter in July 2024 – although I acknowledge Mr L says he didn't receive this. Regardless, the key issue here is the data breach.

THLL has admitted to making a mistake and taken steps to put things right, including an offer of compensation to reflect what happened. As such, the only thing I need to decide is whether what THLL has already done and offered is fair, or whether it needs to do anything more to put things right.

After the issue had been identified, THLL sent a message to the incorrect e-mail address asking for the information sent to be deleted. This is what I'd expect a business to do in this situation. Although THLL says no response has been received, there's nothing to suggest that the information that was sent to the incorrect e-mail address has been misused.

That said, it's clear that THLL's error has caused Mr L and Mrs L significant worry and inconvenience. Mr L has detailed the steps he has taken, that he deemed necessary, to mitigate potential issues he and Mrs L have understandably been concerned about.

THLL's offer of £500 compensation is an amount that reflects a situation where the impact of a mistake has caused considerable distress, upset and worry – and/or significant inconvenience and disruption that needs a lot of extra effort to sort out, potentially over many months.

I find this reflects the impact of THLL's error on Mr L and Mrs L. I appreciate that Mr L and Mrs L think the compensation amount should be higher, but I disagree. I find the amount offered is fair and in line with our approach to compensation awards.

As such, THLL doesn't need to do anything further to put things right.

If in future Mr L and Mrs L believe the data breach has caused a specific issue beyond the worry and inconvenience they've already described, they should raise this with THLL in the first instance.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that Tandem Home Loans Ltd needs to pay Mr L and Mrs L a total of £500 in compensation to reflect the impact of its error sending information to the wrong e-mail address.

If THLL has already paid some or all of this compensation, it can deduct this from what it still needs to pay.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr L and Mrs L to accept or reject my decision before 6 June 2025.

Ben Brewer  
**Ombudsman**