

The complaint

Mr R complains that Barclays Bank UK PLC trading as Tesco Bank (“Tesco”) didn’t apply a 0% promotional rate to his credit card account despite it being offered to him.

What happened

Mr R completed a balance transfer for around £2,500 on 21 January 2025. A day later, he received a balance transfer fee for around £99.

After receiving his March statement, Mr R noticed the account had accrued interest which he wasn’t expecting. He complained to Tesco because he said he’d received an offer of a 0% rate on a balance transfer.

Tesco responded to his complaint explaining that there was an offer for a 0% balance transfer rate – but it expired on 8 January 2025 – and because this transfer didn’t take place until 21 January 2025, the promotional rate no longer existed, and his usual interest rate would apply.

However, Tesco did apply a two month interest waiver as a gesture of goodwill while Mr R decided how he wanted to proceed with the account. Mr R was unhappy with the response so he referred his complaint to our service.

An Investigator here looked into things. They agreed Tesco hadn’t made an error, and highlighted where the promotional offers were, and when they expired. They felt that the interest waiver for two months was fair because they hadn’t done anything wrong.

Mr R didn’t agree – he felt that the terms should’ve been clearer and feels there must have been a number of consumers affected by the same issue.

Because an agreement couldn’t be reached, the 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.

Having done so, I’ve reached the same outcome as the Investigator, for the same reasons. I know this is likely to be a disappointment for Mr R – but I hope he can understand my reasoning why.

Tesco have shared system screenshots that show Mr R had access to balance transfers on a promotional 0% rate. These became available on 3 December 2024 and expired on 8 January 2025. Mr R didn’t apply for the balance transfer until 21 January 2025 and therefore, the application was made past the offer expiry date. There’s nothing to suggest that another offer was made available after this one.

They've also provided a screenshot that shows what Mr R's app more likely than not would've shown when he was applying for the balance transfer. The screenshot has two bullet points that are clear and concise, and positioned at the top of the screen – the first bullet point says '*Your standard interest rate will apply*'. So, while I acknowledge Mr R feels the terms weren't clear, I believe they were based on the evidence available, which isn't in dispute.

To ensure the evidence supplied to us was accurate, Tesco have also checked if there were any known IT issues on the day Mr R applied for the balance transfer which may have affected how the promotional rate was displayed on the app. They've confirmed there wasn't and so I think it more likely that the information Mr R would have been provided at the time of transferring the balance would have explained to him that the transfer would be completed at his standard rate.

Based on the above, it follows that I don't think Tesco made any error and therefore haven't treated Mr R unfairly. By offering Mr R a two-month interest waiver, allowing him space to decide how to proceed with the account, they've gone above and beyond what I would've expected them to do.

I appreciate Mr R's comments regarding the terms being clearer, but based on what I've seen, I'm satisfied all the information he required to make an informed decision were clearly displayed on the app and Tesco allowed Mr R two-months interest free to evaluate his position and whether or not he wanted to proceed with the balance transfer, or if he could find a better rate elsewhere.

I also note what he's said regarding other consumers, but it's not the role of our service to consider the impact to other consumers, I can only consider the impact on Mr R. And I'm satisfied that Tesco didn't act unfairly, and they've gone above and beyond in supporting Mr R by waiving interest for two months, so it follows that I'm not upholding his complaint.

My final decision

Your text here

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr R to accept or reject my decision before 30 June 2025.

Meg Raymond
Ombudsman