

The complaint

Mr B complains about the service provided by TSB Bank plc (TSB) when he wanted to move money between his TSB accounts and the payment was repeatedly blocked.

To put things right Mr B would like TSB to pay him more substantial financial redress than it has done so far.

What happened

Mr B complained to TSB about blocking his transfer requests when he wanted to move £5,000 from his TSB current account to his TSB savings account. TSB upheld Mr B's complaint in part. It said:

- on 10 January 2025, when Mr B paid £25,000 from his TSB 'Spend & Save' account to his account at a different bank, this took him to the maximum daily limit for payments from an account via internet/mobile banking – so he couldn't authorise any further payments that day.
- Additionally, an attempted £5,000 transfer he wanted to make to his savings account was flagged for further checks by TSB's fraud team and blocked until it could be approved. TSB said this was part of its security process and the system had worked as designed.
- TSB did however apologise for excessive call wait times experienced by Mr B when he'd phoned repeatedly from abroad trying to have the block lifted, giving him incorrect information about setting up a future dated payment and for not removing the block on 10 January 2025 as well as lack of communication between departments when his calls were transferred. TSB arranged to pay him £100 for distress and inconvenience. TSB also said it would reimburse call costs and any other costs incurred if he provided evidence.

Mr B didn't feel this was a satisfactory response and so he brought his complaint to us.

Our investigator didn't think he'd seen enough to ask TSB to take any further action. Mr B strongly disagreed with our investigator. He mainly said:

- TSB shouldn't have blocked the £5,000 internal transfer he wanted to make to his savings account and it was '*...unreasonable and unacceptable to treat an internal transfer as a risk event in the same way as a payment to an unfamiliar external party.*'
- He was repeatedly passed between fraud and telephone banking teams and he had to explain his situation time and time again.
- TSB required him to email additional photo ID – even though Mr B was logged into his online banking.

- He doesn't feel TSB properly considered the impact all this had in terms of stress and disruption, bearing in mind that he was on holiday overseas at the time.

Mr B has asked for an ombudsman to review his complaint, so it comes 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.

I can understand why what's happened has been upsetting and frustrating for Mr B. But having thought about everything, I've independently reached the same overall conclusions as our investigator. I'll explain my reasons.

When Mr B received a substantial five-figure payment into his TSB 'Spend & Save' account on 10 January 2025, he successfully transferred £25,000 to his account at another bank, which took him to the payment limit that day. Mr B accepts that this meant he wasn't able to make a further payment of £10,000 to a different account held at another bank on 10 January. So I'm concentrating on Mr B's complaint about TSB blocking his attempts to move £5,000 to his TSB savings account.

TSB is required to satisfy regulatory requirements and have in place measures to combat fraud and protect customers' money. Sometimes this can mean the bank identifies and blocks legitimate payments that a customer wants to make. Understandably, this can cause distress and inconvenience to a customer – but it doesn't necessarily mean the bank has acted incorrectly or unfairly.

It makes no difference to my view that Mr B was attempting to move the £5,000 payment between his own accounts at TSB. Anti-fraud checks are designed in the interests of TSB customers to help keep their money safe and prevent fraudulent activity on their accounts. The relevant account terms and conditions, which Mr B would've agreed to in order to be able to use his account, allowed TSB to refuse payment instruction in these circumstances.

TSB has provided confidential systems information to me (which I can't share). Despite what Mr B has said about moving money between his own accounts, I have concluded that TSB didn't act unfairly or unreasonably when its fraud detection system identified the need for a check before Mr B's internal transfer payment could be authorised and it blocked the £5,000 transfer Mr B wanted to make.

TSB still needed to act in a fair and reasonable way towards Mr B and from the information provided, I agree that some aspects of TSB's service were below par.

Having listened carefully to Mr B's discussions with the various call handlers, I think it's fair for TSB to acknowledge that it fell short of providing a reasonable level of customer service. Not removing the block that was preventing Mr B being able to move £5,000 to his savings account at the first opportunity on 10 January was a shortcoming on TSB's part. But, as explained above, even if the block had been correctly removed, he'd already reached the maximum transfer limit for that day. So his attempt to make that transfer would have failed in any event on 10 January even if it hadn't also been flagged for fraud checks.

And whilst TSB incorrectly told Mr B that he could set up a future dated payment to send the £10,000 payment he wanted to make on 11 January, it wouldn't have gone out until the next working day, which would've been 13 January. But this misinformation didn't result in any delay because on 11 January 2025 Mr B sent the £10,000 himself by faster payment to his

account held at another bank. That was a new payment instruction, so I think it was reasonable for TSB to apply its security checks and take Mr B through further security.

And despite the undoubted inconvenience to Mr B, I accept that TSB was entitled to require him to provide photo ID and that wasn't unreasonable in these circumstances. I'm mindful that TSB might potentially have said instead that it wanted to see him in person at a branch with his ID documents, which would've been even more inconvenient – at least this way, TSB gave Mr B the opportunity to complete his transaction.

In order to uphold Mr B's complaint I would have to find that TSB didn't treat Mr B in a fair and reasonable way overall or that it hadn't done enough to put poor service issues right. Here, for the reasons explained above, I agree that some aspects of the service provided were sub-standard. In particular, being passed between the fraud and telephone banking departments led to Mr B having to make extra calls and spending an unreasonable length of time on the phone to TSB, sometimes having to repeat information he'd already provided. And TSB has accepted that the call handlers he spoke to could have managed his calls more effectively and upheld this part of Mr B's complaint. So I've thought about the question of fair redress.

Our approach to redress is to aim to look at what's fair and reasonable in all the circumstances of a complaint. One way we would try and do this impartially here is to put Mr B in the position he'd be in if TSB hadn't been responsible for the poor service issues it has admitted. So my starting point is to think about the impact on Mr B of what happened.

TSB offered to reimburse Mr B's international call costs, but he's confirmed that calls were made using his mobile provider's inclusive roaming allowance. So as he hasn't been left out of pocket as a result of having to phone from overseas, I don't need to consider this aspect further. And I haven't been provided with anything else to show that what happened meant Mr B is worse off financially.

Fair compensation also needs to properly reflect the wider impact on Mr B of TSB's service failings. I've taken into account that Mr B said the effort and distress caused during his holiday '*...was substantial, particularly given the disjointed and uncoordinated handling by TSB that required repeated calls and explanations.*' I'm very sorry that all this happened when Mr B was on holiday. Clearly, that was unfortunate timing and I can appreciate that being abroad made this a more stressful situation.

But thinking about everything, the £100 payment TSB has paid by way of apology seems fair to me in all the circumstances. I haven't seen or heard enough to make me think it would be reasonable to require TSB to do more here, keeping in mind that TSB was entitled to carry out security checks and ultimately, Mr B was able to complete the payments he wanted to make on 11 January. I am satisfied that £100 matches the level of award I would make in these circumstances had it not already been paid. It is in line with the amount this service would award in similar cases, and it is fair compensation for Mr B in his particular situation.

Looked at overall, I am satisfied that TSB has already taken responsibility for addressing shortcomings in the service provided and done enough to put this right.

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 B to accept or reject my decision before 11 July 2025.

Susan Webb
Ombudsman