

The complaint

Mr A complains about the service he received from Bank of Scotland trading as Halifax when he asked for help in getting a refund for a transaction paid on his debit card.

What happened

In October 2024, Mr A paid a deposit of £65 to his dentist, for an upcoming appointment. Having attended his appointment, Mr A says the dentist carried out a different service to the one he'd booked, so it declined to deduct the deposit from the amount he owed, saying he had to pay the balance in full.

The dentist didn't refund the £65 Mr A had paid, so he contacted Halifax for help in getting a refund. Halifax raised a chargeback, which is a process of asking the merchant for a refund via rules set by the card scheme, Visa in the circumstances of this complaint.

All parties accept Halifax could have handled the chargeback process better as there was back and forth between all parties with Halifax providing a credit to Mr A's account for the £65, then removing it and then reapplying it.

Mr A's chargeback was ultimately successful, meaning he received a refund of the £65. Halifax recognised the service it provided should have been better and paid Mr A £75 to apologise for this.

Unhappy with Halifax's response, Mr A referred his concerns to our service. One of our Investigator's looked into what happened and thought Halifax's offer was fair. He acknowledged that the service Halifax had provided Mr A, should have been better and thought it's offer of compensation was reasonable in the circumstances.

Mr A disagreed, saying Halifax had caused significant inconvenience, so it should pay further compensation to apologise for this.

As the matter wasn't resolved, 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.

I've given consideration to the relevant rules and regulations applicable to this complaint and while I may not comment on everything (only what I consider is key) this is not meant as a discourtesy to either party, rather reflects the informal nature of our service.

Mr A's chargeback was successful, meaning he received a refund of the £65 he'd requested. So, my decision focuses on the service Halifax provided throughout this process and whether the compensation it's offered is fair.

I'd like to acknowledge Mr A's concerns about the treatment he received from the dentist, the pain this caused and knock on effects. While I don't wish to diminish the impact of this and the inconvenience caused, I'm limited to looking at the actions of Halifax in this complaint as the regulated financial firm.

Mr A contacted Halifax on 5 November 2024 for help in getting a refund, and this was successfully applied to his account on 30 January 2025, so I've reviewed Halifax's actions during this period.

Halifax provided Mr A a temporary credit of £65, in November 2024, while it reviewed his dispute. An advisor at Halifax then incorrectly identified a refund Mr A had received from his dentist for the same amount earlier in the year – this was however for a separate transaction. The advisor then incorrectly removed the credit from Mr A's account and closed his dispute.

Mr A had to contact Halifax a number of times and submit further evidence to confirm which transaction he was disputing. Halifax didn't act on this further information as soon as it could have, finally raising the chargeback on 30 January 2025. I don't doubt this would have been frustrating to Mr A, as there was much back and forth meaning it took longer than necessary to raise the chargeback.

Halifax has acknowledged that it's made errors and apologised for this, while I appreciate Mr A doesn't think the payment of £75 compensation fairly recognises this, in the circumstances I do think this is reasonable.

I say this as the initial decision to close the dispute appears to have been due to a genuine error. While this shouldn't have happened, Halifax did eventually take steps to rectify this, albeit taking longer than it should have to do so. This meant Mr A didn't lose out as a result - being that Halifax successfully raised the chargeback. Halifax paid £75 to apologise, which is within the range of what I would consider to be a reasonable outcome here, so on this basis I won't be asking Halifax to do anything further.

I appreciate Mr A also raised concerns that he didn't receive Halifax's final response to his complaint and it should have ensured he'd received this. While I realise this would have added to Mr A's frustrations of the overall experience he'd encountered, I haven't found Halifax made an error on this point.

I'm satisfied Halifax sent the final response to the correct address for Mr A, which is what is required to do. While it's possible this got lost in transit, this isn't something Halifax would have control over and its obligation was to send a copy of the response, which I'm satisfied it did. And in considering Halifax's response to Mr A's complaint, I've found this fair as I've found the compensation paid was reasonable, for the reasons set out above.

In conclusion, while I can appreciate Mr A is disappointed with the service he received, I think Halifax has taken reasonable steps to put things right. The underlying chargeback was successful, meaning Mr A didn't suffer a loss. Mr A has been put to inconvenience due to errors made by Halifax and for the reasons explained above, I think its payment of £75 compensation is reasonable, so I won't be asking it to pay anything further.

My final decision

For the reasons I've explained above, I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr A to accept or reject my decision before 2 September 2025.

Christopher Convery
Ombudsman