

The complaint

Mr R complains Clydesdale Bank Plc trading as Virgin Money didn't set up an ISA for him as had been agreed when he went into branch.

What happened

Mr R and his wife arranged a face-to-face meeting with a Virgin Money advisor in March 2024. They wanted to talk about their savings and to invest money into an ISA. They say the advisor helped them set up a current account – needed in order to open an ISA – and that they handed over a cheque for £41,000 so that the account could be funded and £20,000 paid into an ISA for each of them.

Mr R and his wife say that they discovered their ISAs hadn't been set up properly when they received a message to say they were due to mature. They complained to Virgin Money saying they'd lost out on interest and the ability to use their 2023-24 allowance.

Virgin Money looked into Mr R's complaint and his wife's complaint and replied separately to each of them. Virgin Money didn't uphold Mr R's complaint saying that the cheque wouldn't have cleared until at least three days later and it was only once the cheque had cleared that an instruction could have been given to move funds into his ISA, and there was no record of any such instruction. Virgin Money did, however, acknowledge that they hadn't received a call back when they should have done and offered £30 in compensation for the distress and inconvenience this poor service would have caused.

One of our investigators looked into Mr R's complaint but didn't recommend it be upheld. They said that there was no evidence that the ways money would normally be paid into an ISA had been completed and that Virgin Money had sent documentation that showed that the proceeds of the cheque remained in the joint account. Mr R was unhappy with our investigator's recommendations and asked for his complaint to be referred to an ombudsman for a decision. His complaint was, as a result, passed to me.

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 have no doubt that Mr R and his wife planned to pay £40,000 into two separate ISAs and that they decided to open an ISA with Virgin Money because it offered a really competitive rate at the time. That involved, amongst other things, opening a current account into which they deposited a cheque. I have no doubt too that this was why they made an appointment. I can see that they took various steps towards this – getting the joint account set up, handing over a £41,000 cheque, and getting telephone and online banking set up. And I can see that they were sent a letter that confirmed their ISAs had been set up but crucially not the balance in the ISAs.

I agree with our investigator that Mr R and his wife would have needed to do more in order to get the money they'd paid into their current account transferred into the ISAs. There's no evidence that those additional steps were taken. I agree too with our investigator that the current account statements Mr R and his wife subsequently received should have alerted them to the fact that no money had been transferred into their ISAs. In the circumstances, I agree that this complaint, notwithstanding the fact that I don't doubt Mr R and his wife's plans, can't be upheld. I appreciate that this will be hugely disappointing.

My final decision

My final decision is that I can't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr R to accept or reject my decision before 15 October 2025.

Nicolas Atkinson
Ombudsman