DRN-5747146

The complaint

Mr and Mrs B complain that TSB Bank plc used the wrong currency for an international transfer which meant they lost money.

What happened

Mr B says he tried to transfer £70,000 to his account in Poland on 23 October 2024. The account is in Great British Pound (GBP). He says the payment was blocked and there followed problems trying to unblock his account. Mr B says he went to a TSB branch on 24 October 2024 where the transaction was made. He says he checked the screen first and the currency was listed as GBP. Mr B says he later realised the payment had been made in Polish Zloty (PLN) which meant it was then converted back to GBP resulting in a loss of just over £4,492. He would like that loss repaid and compensation for what took place.

TSB says it is entitled to block a payment or account where it has security concerns. It says Mr B attended a branch and made the transaction himself. It also says he would have authorised the payment and would have had to enter a password to do so.

Mr B brought his complaint to us and our investigator didn't uphold it. The investigator thought TSB was entitled to block a payment and that Mr B authorised the payment in PLN.

Mr B does not accept that view and says TSB staff have changed the currency.

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 have come to the overall view that I don't uphold this complaint. I appreciate Mr and Mrs B will be disappointed by my decision. I make clear to them that I have read all of the documents they have provided but intend to comment on what I consider to be the main parts of this complaint.

I am sure Mr and Mrs B appreciate that fraud is major problem for banks and building societies and that they must have measures in place to protect its as well as customers money. I appreciate that on occasions as here, that legitimate customers and transactions are made subject to security measures. That does not mean TSB made a mistake here by placing security measure on Mr and Mrs B's account and that such measures are in line with account terms and conditions. So, I don't think that TSB made a mistake or acted unfairly by blocking the account and attempted transaction.

I accept that Mr B attended a branch on 24 October 2024 to complete the transaction and remove the security block which would have caused some inconvenience. But I think that some inconvenience is inevitable in circumstances like this. The important part of this complaint is what took place in branch.

I am satisfied that Mr B authorised the transaction and must have inserted the details. I appreciate he says he reviewed the screen before authorising the transaction and that TSB must have changed the transaction from GBP to PLN. But I think on balance that is unlikely and think that Mr B must have authorised the transaction which was in PLN and not his intended currency choice as well as entering his password. I can’t see how TSB staff could have changed the currency after Mr B authorised it. So, it follows that I don’t think TSB made a mistake or deliberately changed the currency and so I can’t fairly direct it to compensate Mr and Mrs B for the exchange rate loss.

My final decision

My final decision is that I don’t uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I’m required to ask Mrs B and Mr B to accept or reject my decision before 1 October 2025.

David Singh
Ombudsman