

## **The complaint**

Mr and Mrs G complain that The Co-operative Bank Plc (Co-op) stopped, cancelled, and failed to inform her of, a payment they requested, and how Co-op mishandled a joint bank account set up. I will solely refer to Mrs G for ease of reading.

## **What happened**

In April this year, Mrs G input via Co-op's online banking, an important payment to a company I'll refer to as X. The payment was held by Co-op for security until they heard from Mrs G so they attempted contact via text message and telephone. Mrs G did not have a record of the attempts and after a number of days of not receiving a response from Mrs G, Co-op cancelled the payment request and emailed Mrs G to inform her.

Mrs G telephoned Co-op on receipt of the email and was told incorrectly, that Co-op do not always attempt contact with a customer when a payment is temporarily held. Unhappy about the payment rejection, the financial consequences of the payment not arriving, and the information she was given, Mrs G complained to Co-op.

Soon after, Mrs G also tried to switch her bank account to another provider which was initially rejected, causing inconvenience. Holding Co-op responsible for this as she considered they did not set up the account correctly, she raised this as an associated complaint, linking this error to the earlier complaint about the payment.

Co-op investigated both issues and issued their response. Regarding the payment rejection, Co-op explained what they could about why the payment was held, but that they did send a message and attempted phone calls using the telephone number on file. And as they received no response, the payment was cancelled. Therefore they could not uphold this aspect.

In terms of the incorrect information given to Mrs G when she called to complain, Co-op apologised and clarified that they do always attempt contact with a customer in these circumstances. In acknowledgement for the confusion they caused, Co-op offered £100.

And concerning Mrs G's point about what she regarded as Co-op's mishandling of the joint account set up, Co-op said they correctly rejected the switching request from the other provider as that provider failed to provide correct details when they requested the switch. As Co-op did set up the account correctly, the switching error did not lie with them.

Remaining unhappy, Mrs G brought the matter to our service detailing Co-op's failures and the significant consequences of cancelling the payment. Mrs G also reiterated her unhappiness about the mishandling of the payment, the joint account, and the compensation amount offered.

After looking into the complaint, our investigator said they regarded Co-op's offer as fair for the information error they made. Our investigator explained what had happened and that Co-op followed their payment process correctly. Finally, regarding the joint account switch, they

could not hold Co-op responsible as our investigator confirmed that the error was not made by Co-op.

Mrs G disagreed saying that Co-op failed in its duty to ensure effective notice of a stopped payment, our service should recognise the losses caused by the payment cancellation, and should review Co-op's financial offer. Accordingly, the matter has been passed to me as an ombudsman to review.

### **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 looked carefully at all the information Co-op have provided to see if it has acted within its terms and conditions, followed due process, and to see if it treated Mrs G fairly. I also want to thank Mrs G for everything she has sent to this service, and reassure her that I've considered it all in my deliberations.

My role is to consider the evidence provided, alongside what both sides have said, to decide if Co-op has acted fairly. The Financial Ombudsman Service is not a regulatory body or a Court of Law, instead we serve as an informal, unbiased dispute resolution service. Although we consider relevant law and regulation when investigating complaints, our focus is to determine whether we believe a fair or unfair outcome has taken place, from an impartial standpoint, after considering all the factors and circumstances of a complaint.

It is always regrettable when we see relatively simple requests such as sending money and switching an account result in a complaint and I sympathise with Mrs G for the frustration she experienced.

In terms of the complaint point around the account switch and what Mrs G regarded as Co-op's mishandling of the joint account, from what I've seen, I don't believe Co-op are responsible here so it's not a point I will address any further. It therefore follows that there appears to be no connection between the set up of the joint account and the payment issue. Besides, it seems clear that the most important aspect of this complaint is the payment, the contact attempts, and its subsequent cancellation by the Co-op.

Regarding Co-op's questioning and holding of the payment, they are fully entitled, and are required to have in place, compliant due diligence procedures as they've explained. This is standard practice across the financial services industry, and Co-op's actions were in line with their terms and conditions, and common practices adopted by financial institutions worldwide to protect their customers. So, I find no error made here when Co-op held the payment.

Importantly, I've seen evidence that Co-op sent a text message to the correct number for Mrs G, and used that same telephone number to make their multiple attempts over the days after Mrs G input the payment. I fully acknowledge that Mrs G is adamant she received neither the text, nor the call attempts but I can't hold Co-op responsible for that, in view of the proof that supports the message was sent, and the calls made. Mrs G has talked about Co-op's failure to ensure effective communication after the payment was held, but in view of Co-op's efforts and evidence, I can't agree with this point.

Going forward, if she has not already done so, I would respectfully direct Mrs G to her telephone service provider who should be able to provide a record of messages and calls for the days in question.

Overall, other than the single occasion of incorrect information within the complaint call, I've not found that Co-op did anything wrong when it held the payment, attempted contact, then after receiving no engagement from Mrs G, cancelled it.

I recognise how strongly Mrs G feels about, and has detailed, the financial impact of the payment not being received by X, in particular as it needed to be with them by a certain cut-off date. However, as I've not identified an error made by Co-op in their handling of the payment (other than the misinformation), I can't fairly ask Co-op to address this.

Finally, regarding the £100 offered, I do believe this is appropriate for the incorrect information that was given within Mrs G's complaint call.

### **My final decision**

For the reasons I have given it is my final decision that the complaint remains upheld and I require The Co-operative Bank Plc to pay Mr and Mrs G £100.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr G and Mrs G to accept or reject my decision before 24 October 2025.

Chris Blamires  
**Ombudsman**