

## **The complaint**

Miss C, a sole trader, complains that Tide Platform Limited (Tide) declined her business account application. She wants them to re-consider the application and award compensation for the distress and inconvenience caused.

## **What happened**

Miss C applied for a business account with Tide. On the online application form she chose 'adult services' for the business type.

Tide considered her application but declined it. They explained that they do not currently offer business accounts to the industry that Miss C works in.

Miss C was unhappy, so she complained. She asked Tide to re-consider her business account application. She explained that she is an independent escort, who works in full compliance with UK law. She said that Tide had previously offered accounts to those who work in her industry, and she asked why they had 'adult services' as a drop-down option on the application form if it wasn't an industry they serviced. She also complained that she'd been given conflicting information about her account and whether it was being considered or declined.

Tide responded to Miss C's complaint and said they'd considered her application thoroughly, but it wasn't an industry they could service at this time. They also said there had been a slight delay in the emails that were sent to her, which meant she received an email acknowledging her account application, after it had already been declined. They apologised.

Miss C remained unhappy and brought her complaint to this service. One of our Investigators considered the matter. She explained that it was up to Tide to decide who they offered business accounts to, and they were satisfied that it was clear on their website, that they did not currently offer business accounts to those who work in the adult industry, including escorts. The Investigator explained that this was Tide's commercial decision and not something we'd get involved in.

Miss C disagreed and referred to FCA guidance. She said that Tide had applied a blanket risk approach to the adult service industry and they should've considered her individual application. She also asked why they had 'adult services' as a drop-down option on the application form if it wasn't something they offered, and why she'd received conflicting and confusing correspondence from Tide.

The Investigator explained that the FCA guidance Miss C was referring to was about Politically Exposed People and therefore not relevant in this case. She also explained that just because 'adult services' was an option on the drop down, does not mean they offer business accounts to these industries. She also explained that although she recognised the emails Miss C received from Tide were confusing, she didn't think this was enough to warrant compensation for the distress caused.

Miss C disagreed and asked for her complaint to be reviewed by an ombudsman.

## **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've reached the same conclusion as the Investigator, for broadly the same reasons. I've explained my findings below:

### **Tide's decision to decline the business account application**

It isn't within my remit to decide which industries Tide should offer business accounts to. This is a commercially sensitive decision, which Tide are entitled to make.

In this instance I'm satisfied that Tide considered Miss C's application for a business account and declined it, explaining their reasons why. I've also looked at their website and I can see they explain which business industries they do not currently offer services to – including the adult industry. This information is clearly set out and explains that these types of businesses are outside of their risk appetite. So, I'm satisfied they make this information readily available on their website and the decision they made was in line with their current risk appetite.

I understand Miss C has asked why there is the option to select 'adult services' if it's not an industry that Tide currently offers business accounts to. But it's important when Tide collects information as part of the application process, that there is the option to select the correct business type. This allows them to consider the application and decide if they accept it or decline it. Just because it is an option, doesn't mean Tide has done something wrong. I'm satisfied it's there to ensure they collect important information about the business who is applying for the account.

I'm also aware Miss C has referred to FCA guidance, specifically FG17/6. But I'm satisfied this does not apply here. The guidance she has referred to is about the treatment of Politically Exposed People for anti-money laundering purposes. Miss C is not a Politically Exposed Person.

### **Conflicting and confusing email correspondence**

It's clear that Tide sent some emails to Miss C in the wrong order. She received one email saying the business account application had been declined, shortly followed by another email saying they were considering her application.

I acknowledge this was confusing – but I'm also satisfied that Tide quickly and promptly clarified the account application was declined. Which meant Miss C was aware that it wasn't being reviewed. I do not think they need to do anything further in this instance.

I understand the outcome of this complaint will come as a disappointment to Miss C. But I'm satisfied in the circumstances that Tide considered Miss C's application and declined it in line with their current processes. They do not need to do anything further.

### **My final decision**

For the reasons I've explained above, I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss C to accept or reject my decision before 28 October 2025.

Rachel Killian  
**Ombudsman**