

The complaint

Ms H complains that a payment she made via Wise Payments Limited (Wise) through the SWIFT system resulted in the recipient receiving less money than was sent.

What happened

In May 2025, Ms H sent money abroad from her Wise account. The amount received by the recipient was less than Ms H sent, so she complained to Wise. Ms H said the transfer receipt was misleading and didn't show the recipient may receive less than she'd sent.

Wise said the payment was sent by SWIFT as it was in Sterling to a country where this is not a local currency. And because SWIFT uses intermediary banks as part of this type of transfer, Wise has no control over any charges these banks may make. Wise said Ms H was made aware of this before submitting the transfer.

Unhappy with this response, Ms H referred her complaint to our Service. At this point Wise offered to refund half of the fees charged by the intermediary banks as a gesture of goodwill. Ms H didn't accept the offer. So, one of our Investigators looked into the complaint. They were satisfied Wise hadn't made a mistake and had made it clear that intermediary banks may charge fees.

Ms H didn't accept this and asked for an Ombudsman to consider her complaint. So, it's been passed to me to review and make a final decision.

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.

Ms H has submitted her complaint to us in great detail. And she's referenced a number of industry rules and regulations she believes Wise is in breach of. I want to reassure Ms H that I've thought about everything she's said. I may not address each and every point she's raises, nor am I going to respond in the detail that she's submitted her complaint in. Instead, I'll focus on the crux of the complaint. I hope Ms H realises I mean no disrespect by this, it simply reflects the informal nature of this Service.

I'd also add at this point that it's not for our Service to "police" the industry – that's the FCA. Ms H has referenced various regulations and the Consumer Duty. The Consumer Duty is a new standard for firms which was introduced by the regulator, the Financial Conduct Authority. It sets a higher standard for firms in terms of how they are interacting with their customers, and it applies to events from 31 July 2023. The Duty does not replace or substitute other applicable rules, guidance or law and doesn't ask firms to act in a way that's incompatible with any legal or regulatory requirements.

As I'm required to do, I've had the Consumer Duty in mind when considering Ms H's complaint, along with relevant law and regulations, regulators' rules, guidance and standards, codes of practice and (where appropriate) what I consider to have been good

industry practice at the relevant time. But our overarching remit is to reach an outcome that we consider fair and reasonable in the circumstances. This sometimes means we will reach an outcome different to that which a court might. Again, this is due to the informal nature of this Service as an alternative to the courts.

Wise and Ms H have sent us screenshot of what Ms H would've seen when arranging the wire transfer. The screenshots show that Ms H would've seen the following warning:

To send money to this account, we need to use the SWIFT network. Its slower, so the transfer might take longer. Also note that intermediary banks and your recipients bank might charge extra fees to the amount received.

I'm satisfied that Wise made it clear that there may be fees charged by intermediary and receiving banks before the transfer is received by the recipient. Furthermore, there is detail on Wise's website regarding potential fees involved in international transfers.

The fact is that Wise sent the full amount Ms H asked it to. It didn't make any deductions or charge any fees. The intermediary and receiving bank would've been the ones who made reductions, as Wise warned they may.

There's no way Wise could've known what these fees would be. And as Wise didn't charge these fees, it's not responsible for making Ms H aware of what they would be or refunding them.

Ms W has said that the receipt provided by Wise didn't show fees by the intermediary or receiving bank. She's correct, and I wouldn't expect it to. As I've explained, Wise wouldn't be aware what other banks may charge. And the receipt simply confirms what has been sent – the full amount – not what will be received.

Ms W has also complained about the customer service provided by Wise. I've been provided with a recording and transcript of the call in question. Whilst the agent wasn't able to answer Ms H's questions immediately, they were able to eventually provide the information Ms H required. I can see Ms H wasn't happy with the answer, but this doesn't mean the agent was providing poor customer service. I can see that the call became unproductive at the end as Ms H wasn't willing to accept what she was being told which led to the agent terminating the call. The agent gave Ms H notice they intended to do so, and I don't consider it was unreasonable in the circumstances.

Lastly, Ms H has complained about the manner in which Wise handled her complaint. Our Investigator explained to her that complaint handling isn't an activity that our Service is able to consider. Whilst Ms H may not agree with this, it is correct. So, I can't make any finding about how Wise handled the complaint.

I can see Ms H feels very strongly about this matter. But, for the reasons set out above, I'm satisfied that Wise hasn't made a mistake or otherwise treated Ms H unfairly. So, I'm not going to make any award. If Ms H wishes to accept Wise's goodwill offer, she can let our Investigator know, who can then see if Wise is still willing to offer this.

My final decision

I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Ms H to accept or reject my decision before 5 January 2025.

Rob Deadman
Ombudsman