

The complaint

Mr K complains about some issues he had regarding a loan he took with TSB Bank plc trading as TSB ("TSB").

What happened

Mr K is unhappy that the interest he owes on the loan shows separately from the loan balance on his statements. He was specifically unhappy with a £50 charge showing on the loan on his May 2025 statement which he feels hasn't been explained.

Alongside this, when he has tried to deal with his loan via the instant chat system TSB offer, they've said they can't offer this service and asked him to either call up, or visit a branch, which he feels unable to do as a vulnerable customer.

He complained to TSB and after he escalated this, they responded with a partial uphold about their service in June 2025. They said that the way interest was calculated was explained in the terms and conditions of his account and was correct, so they didn't agree they'd got anything wrong with that. They also didn't uphold his concerns about how he could contact them, explaining that they had offered telephone or branch visits but couldn't offer an online chat service to discuss loans.

They upheld the fact that they hadn't answered his concerns properly the first time he raised them and paid him £30 for this. Unhappy with this response, he brought his complaint to our service.

When sending us their file on the case, TSB made a proactive offer. They recognised it was unhelpful to have referred Mr K to call the loan team or visit a branch when he had explained the difficulties with this in the live chat due to his vulnerabilities, so they offered a further £70 for the distress and inconvenience caused to him. They also highlighted that it may be worth Mr K considering a third-party service they supported which would allow him to text, whilst a third party spoke to them on the phone to relay his text, and then the third party could text him the responses they were given on the phone by TSB.

Mr K declined their offer so an Investigator at our service investigated his concerns, and gave their response in October 2025, saying that they felt the offer was fair. They explained that we can't consider complaint handling concerns, as this isn't a regulated activity that we have authority to make findings about, and said they felt that the interest charge on his loan was correct, and we didn't have the authority to tell a business how they should present information to a consumer, provided the way they did this was fair.

They agreed that the service offered by TSB had caused Mr K some distress and inconvenience but said that the further £70 offered by TSB was in line with what our service would recommend, so wouldn't be asking them to do any more here.

Mr K didn't accept this and asked for an Ombudsman to 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.

Having done so, I've reached the same overall conclusions as the investigator, and for broadly the same reasons. If I haven't commented on any specific point, it's because I don't believe it's affected what I think is the right outcome. Where evidence has been incomplete or contradictory, I've reached my view on the balance of probabilities – what I think is most likely to have happened given the available evidence and wider circumstances.

In considering this complaint I've had regard to the relevant law and regulations; any regulator's rules, guidance and standards, codes of practice, and (if appropriate) what I consider was good industry practice at the time.

I empathise with Mr K at having been told to phone or visit a branch for queries with his loan, when these are communication methods which he finds incredibly difficult. I'm glad that it's now been highlighted to him about the Relay service he can use to make this easier for him, and would encourage him to use this.

He seems to want TSB to provide him exactly the service that suits his personal needs, which would be their live chat system, but we can't tell TSB how they should do business and what channels they should use to communicate. Provided they have fair alternatives for all customers, if they aren't Mr K's preference, that isn't something that makes how they deal with him wrong.

I'm satisfied that the Relay service provides a fair alternative for Mr K to communicate with them and agree that the offer of £70 to recognise the distress and inconvenience caused when they asked him on several occasions to either call them, or visit a branch, is fair and in line with what our service would recommend.

Similarly, Mr K hasn't understood the interest charge showing on his May 2025 statement, but both TSB and the Investigator here have explained it and shown him that it's correct. There really isn't anything further I can add to what he's already been told. The way TSB lay out their statements is fair, and our service doesn't have the authority or remit to tell a business to do things differently unless it is unfair.

Finally, just to confirm what Mr K has already been told, our service can't investigate or make findings about complaint handling. I know he's unhappy with how TSB have answered his complaint, but this isn't an activity we have any authority over, so I won't be dealing with this here.

I'm not sure whether the £70 payment has been made to Mr K yet, so I'd ask TSB, if they haven't already, to make the proactive £70 payment to Mr K.

As an aside, reading the case file does suggest to me that in his current state, Mr K is struggling to process information and understand things, which is understandable based on what he's told us. He's mentioned at times that he does have people who can support him, and I would encourage him to reach out to people that he trusts to see where they can help him, to hopefully help him to become more comfortable with things and how they can be managed.

My final decision

I am not upholding this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr K to accept or reject my decision before 31 December 2025.

Paul Cronin
Ombudsman