

## The complaint

Mr E is unhappy with Wise Payments Limited.

Mr E received £4,000 from his father abroad into his Wise account. He later needed to return the money to his father. He sent this from the account it had originally been sent to. When he checked with his father the money hadn't returned to his account.

## What happened

Wise confirmed to Mr E that it had returned the money to the account it had come from. Mr E contacted his father and told him to reach out to his bank and see what had happened. Mr E's father was told no money had been received by his own bank.

Mr E checked again with Wise, and it asked him to get a bank statement from his father which he did. He provided this to Wise and it said the money would be refunded. When he checked he said Wise claimed it hadn't received the bank statement from him.

Mr E said the £4,000 still needs to be found.

Wise said Mr E initiated a return of the money and it cancelled the transfers in and sent the refunds back to the originating bank account. It said when Mr E contacted it again to say the funds hadn't arrived its Operations team provided transfer receipts and said Mr E could share these with the bank as the money had successfully left Wise. It noted the money had come to it from an intermediary bank "B" and so that was where the money was sent back to.

Wise said it followed up by setting up a trace and it informed Mr E the intermediary bank confirmed the money had arrived in the beneficiary account. After Mr E uploaded the bank statements Mr E requested a recall and Wise started this on 8 August 2025. It anticipated an outcome on 11 September 2025.

Wise said it wasn't liable. It said it returned the money to the account it came from and this was in line with Mr E's request. It said it wasn't liable for any delay with funds. It said this was in line with its terms of use section 29.9 which states Wise isn't responsible for things that are outside of its control.

Wise accepted this was very frustrating for Mr E but said it couldn't uphold his complaint. It paid Mr E £20 as a gesture of goodwill.

Mr E remained unhappy and brought his complaint to this service. He wants the money paid back and compensation for the time and effort taken to resolve this very frustrating situation.

Our investigator upheld the complaint. She said Wise should have made more of an effort to find out what had happened in a timely manner. Our investigator said Wise didn't inform Mr E of the outcome of the recall which was a non recovery and she said there was no evidence of it chasing for the payment. Our investigator also said Wise wrongly assumed Mr E was a customer of B and he can't get the money back. Mr E has opened a Barclay account and

even now he still can't find out anything further about the money. She said this was unfair and poor customer service and one effort to recover the money wasn't enough.

Our investigator concluded Wise should refund Mr E the £4,000 that's gone missing and pay an additional £150 for the distress and inconvenience this has caused him.

Wise didn't accept this and asked for the complaint to be passed to an ombudsman for 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.

There's been a lot of detailed correspondence around the evidence for which I'm grateful. But this is an informal service so I'm not going to comment on everything included within this complaint. Instead, I'm going to stick to what I think are the central points that apply. I can confirm all of the evidence provided by both sides has been considered.

Mr E said he found the whole process frustrating. He said his £4,000 was nowhere to be found and he had been promised he would get a refund.

Mr E felt Wise was focussing on irrelevant points. He said it kept referring to currency issues. Mr E said this was entirely unrelated to the issue. His feeling is there is something fundamentally wrong and a lack of accountability from Wise.

Wise provided Mr E with the Faster Payment ID (FPID) unique payment references used for the transactions. It said the recipient bank could use these to trace the payments. It said regular customer support might not be able to help so it would be best to ask for a manager or the Faster Payment Department to help. Wise said it's unlikely the recipient bank won't be able to locate the payment.

B told Wise the funds had been credited to its general/pooling account so Wise tried to recall the funds but got a "Non-recovery – No Response" answer. Wise said it had no visibility into whether B acted solely as the sending bank or also as the intermediary. It said it was reasonable for it to assume the recipient might be a B customer.

It said it executed the transaction exactly as requested as it was a refund transfer rather than a new manually created payment. And took all possible steps to investigate and trace the funds.

Wise referred to its Terms of Use stating:

*"25.12 We will use reasonable efforts to ensure funds arrive at your recipient's account within the timeframe provided. We will use reasonable efforts to ensure that the funds arrive in the recipient's bank account or payment account within the notified timeframe provided to you. We do not have any control over the time it may take for the recipient's bank or payment provider to credit and make available funds to the recipient."*

*When an incoming transfer is cancelled using our "return transfer" feature, the funds are automatically returned to the originating bank account. This is a default function of our system.*

*We initiated a trace of the funds and received confirmation from B that the funds were successfully credited to the originating account on June 26, 2025. We have no control over how B processes these funds internally, such as the potential use of a suspense account.*

*Please note that as per Section 29 of our Terms of Use, we are not liable for any losses or damages that are unforeseeable or result from factors outside of our control.*

*29.1 Unforeseeable loss or damage. We are not responsible for any loss or damage that is not foreseeable. Loss or damage is foreseeable if either it is obvious that it will happen or if, at the time the contract was made, both we and you knew it might happen, for example, if you discussed it with us during your sign up process.*

*29.9 We are not liable for things which are outside of our control. We (and our affiliates) cannot be liable for our inability to deliver or delay because of things which are outside our control.”*

Wise concluded Mr E's father's bank can liaise with their intermediary banks and obtain greater visibility than it can. Although it didn't accept it needed to repay the £4,000 it did accept it should pay the £150 compensation for distress and inconvenience.

There's agreement between the parties that the money hasn't returned to Mr E's father and he's proven that by providing statements to Wise. And when Mr E did show these statements to Wise it did say it would refund the money to him.

There have been attempts made by Wise to get the money back, but it has been slow in updating Mr E and I've no evidence to show Wise has continued to press B for a resolution. It appears to have stepped back and encouraged Mr E and his father to get the money back themselves. I don't think that's fair or reasonable.

The money is still somewhere in the system. Neither Mr E is getting the benefit of it and the last financial institution to transact that money on his behalf was Wise.

To try and find a way to get the money back Mr E even became a customer of B. But still he's had no joy and no further support. I think Mr E made a fair point when he said Wise didn't do enough to help him get his money back and resolve the matter. I don't think this is a fair or reasonable outcome for Mr E.

I've tried to take this further with our investigator by contacting B ourselves. B said the references we provided from Wise weren't useful. These are the same reference numbers Wise told Mr E that B would be able to use to identify the amounts and where they are. That clearly isn't the case.

Wise knows where it sent the money to and what account B was holding the money in. Based on that it really shouldn't be too difficult for it to get in contact with Barclays and get that money returned.

I think a fair and reasonable outcome here would be for Wise to set aside process issues and truly engage with Barclays to point out when the money was transferred, what the intention was, why it was done the way it was, and ask B to refund it to Wise to resolve this complaint. This applies to the full amount of £4,000.

It is up to Wise if it decides to take that action, but either way I think it should refund the £4,000 to Mr E. I appreciate that it has already agreed to pay the £150 compensation for distress and inconvenience and if it hasn't already paid this then it should pay the total

amount together. There's no doubt this has been a very stressful time for Mr E and for his father.

### **Putting things right**

- Refund Mr E the £4,000.
- Pay £150 compensation for distress and inconvenience.

### **My final decision**

I uphold this complaint.

I require Wise Payments Limited to:

- Refund Mr E the £4,000.
- Pay £150 compensation for distress and inconvenience.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr E to accept or reject my decision before 3 March 2026.

John Quinlan  
**Ombudsman**