

## **The complaint**

Miss S complains Santander UK Plc treated her unfairly when it blocked and closed her account and withheld her account balance, and when dealing with her complaint.

## **What happened**

The details of this complaint are well-known to the parties, so I won't repeat them again. Instead, I'll focus on the reasons in my 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.

Miss S held an account which Santander blocked whilst it completed due diligence and the account was closed. During this time Miss S repeatedly requested her funds back and was unhappy with the way Santander managed the return of her funds and dealt with her complaints.

Santander has accepted some failings in the customer service it provided Miss S and has offered £300 for the impact it caused. The investigator considered that to be a fair offer on the complaint. My review has determined the same. This is for the following key reasons:

- Santander was entitled to place a block the account while it was completing due diligence checks. And based on the evidence I've seen I'm satisfied it was entitled to close the account in the way it did, and it did so, in line with the terms and conditions of the account.
- Santander ought to have told Miss S that she could have transferred her funds out of the account when she was first in contact with it before the account was closed. This has led to Miss S having to go through additional worry and inconvenience to recover the funds after the account had closed.
- Miss S had told us that she wanted to use that money to support her nephew with a payment for his education. She has told us that despite not having the funds to pay at the time, her nephew is enrolled on his course and in his second semester. From listening to the phone calls and what Miss S has told us, I can see she has been upset and inconvenienced by the situation.
- I have seen evidence that Santander did send an initial cheque to Miss S. I appreciate Miss S wanting this sent recorded delivery, I don't find it unreasonable that this was sent via normal post. Miss S requested a bank transfer and Santander told Miss S what was needed for this. Whilst Miss S disagrees with Santander's requirements for sending a bank transfer, I didn't find Santander's requests to be unreasonable for ensuring that Miss S funds were safe and transferred correctly. When requested, Santander did resend the cheque which Miss S has told us was received.
- Santander's communication should have been clearer and correct. Miss S points out

that a letter claimed she'd agreed with a decision. This should have accurately reflected the phone call. This letter upset Miss S, and she's mentioned it throughout her complaint.

Where I award compensation for distress and inconvenience, this isn't to punish the business but to reflect the impact of the business's actions. When I consider the factors above, I'm satisfied £300 is fair compensation for the distress and inconvenience caused.

### **My final decision**

I uphold this complaint. My final decision is that Santander UK Plc offer of £300 is fair. It should pay this to Miss S if it hasn't already.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss S to accept or reject my decision before 11 March 2026.

Simon Yates  
**Ombudsman**