

The complaint

Ms B complains that she had problems with moving money from her J.P. Morgan Europe Limited trading as Chase account, for completion of a house purchase. And that she consequently lost interest on savings.

What happened

In the summer of 2023, Ms B and her husband (Mr D) exchanged contracts on the purchase of a house. They had already previously sold their house and the monies were kept in a number of savings accounts. In August 2023 Mr D had been in contact with Chase about the payment of the monies. As I understand it the funds were going into Ms B's account. She then called Chase to set up in advance a high value payment in order to complete the house purchase. After discussions with an adviser, they explained that this could be set up but Chase would need around five days' notice. And that as there was a maximum amount she could hold in savings accounts, the balance for the house purchase would need to go into her current account.

A couple of days later in the course of a call with Chase Ms B was advised that before the approval process could begin, the monies would need to be in the account(s). She felt she hadn't been told this. As a result, she and Mr D decided to transfer all the monies across, as they came into her current account, to Mr D's account by instalments over the next eight days. I understand that they then completed the purchase by CHAPS payment to their solicitors on the day.

Over that period, Ms B made several calls to Chase as she needed it to approve each payment. She encountered problems with delays in funds being received and approval of payment. She complained that because of Chase's conduct of the matter she had lost several thousand pounds in interest payments.

Chase paid £75 to reflect the poor service over some of the calls. It declined to pay any loss of interest.

On referral to the Financial Ombudsman Service Chase offered a further £50. Our Investigator proposed that the total payment for distress and inconvenience be increased so that Chase would pay a further £350 (not just the £50 offered) on top of the £75 already paid. They didn't think that Chase should pay any loss of interest.

I understand that Ms B accepts the proposed compensation but still claims loss of interest.

The matter has been passed to me for an Ombudsman's consideration.

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 B's dealings with Chase concerning her own account started with the phone call on

15 August 2023. I've noted that Mr D had been in contact with Chase before that over the issue with the house purchase, and I think it's reasonable to assume that he would have communicated with Ms B over this.

In the said phone call, Ms B wanted to set up a payment from her account in advance to complete the house purchase. As this was a substantial payment, far in excess of the amount she could hold in a savings account. and of the maximum daily transfer amount, the adviser explained that a special payment would need to be set up. They did explain that Chase would need several days to approve this. The adviser also talked about the maximum amount Ms B could hold in savings, and she asked whether some of the monies could be held in Mr D's savings account. They explained that this was possible although Mr D would have to go through the same process of approving the payment out before completion.

Having listened to the call, the adviser did not come across to me as being uncertain about the position. But they didn't mention the crucial point that the monies would have to first be in the account before the approval process for the transfer could start. This was explained to Ms B a couple of days later. Although it's fair to say that the evidence of an online chat with Mr D the day before and their experience when paying the deposit on exchange of contracts does show to me that they should have been aware of this.

I understand that Ms B is happy with the proposed award of compensation. It does appear that during those several phone calls when Ms B asked for authority to make various transfers, these were subject to delays, and caused Ms B to have to chase matters up. She was made various promises that the funds would be available when they were not and on a couple of occasions the team responsible for approving the payment had ceased work for the day. As a house purchase in itself is very stressful I can understand that this caused increased distress and inconvenience to Ms B. I think the award of compensation proposed is fair and reasonable.

In respect of loss of interest, whilst I can understand Ms B's unease, the evidence is that Chase did have a process for approving the transfer of large sums of money, so long as it was arranged in advance with the funds in place. I understand that Ms B wanted to maximise the amount of time that funds were held in interest bearing accounts. I can't hold Chase responsible for the limits it has for the amount of funds that can be held in such accounts. I don't think it would have been reasonable for it to make an exception.

I would think it is unusual for such a large cash purchase of a house to take place. So it's not surprising that Chase needed a number of days to approve it. Ms B's holding of the funds was complex as they were split between several financial providers. So it was never going to be easy to ensure that the funds were all there at once. I think Ms B's and Mr D's decision to move the funds by instalments was to relieve that anxiety and ensure that all the funds would be there on the day of completion. But that was their choice. I think it's likely that Chase would have been able to carry out the transfer as requested.

So I won't make an award for loss of interest.

Putting things right

Chase should pay compensation of a further £350, on top of the £75 already paid.

My final decision

I uphold the complaint and require J.P. Morgan Europe Limited trading as Chase to provide

the remedy set out under “Putting things right” above.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I’m required to ask Ms B to accept or reject my decision before 24 December 2025.

Ray Lawley
Ombudsman