

The complaint

Mrs L complains Lloyds Bank PLC provided extremely poor customer care when she visited one of its branches and also ignored her instructions about a money transfer.

What happened

Mrs L had a number of accounts with Lloyds Bank including a current account and a savings account with her husband. She's been a customer of Lloyds Bank for over 30 years. She also has accounts elsewhere including an account with a business who I'll refer to as "N" throughout the rest of this decision.

Mrs L visited her local Lloyds Bank branch in June 2025 in order to do a transaction. The branch had recently introduced a new queueing system that Lloyds Bank is rolling out.

Mrs L says she was stopped at the entrance by a member of staff – as was everyone else – and questioned about her visit. She says she was then told to wait in an area that was already full of customers despite the fact that there were no queues at the counter. She says she found the whole experience intrusive, that she was uncomfortable being asked personal questions in front of other customers and that she wasn't the only unhappy customer. In fact, she was so unhappy that she decided to close her accounts. She says that she wasn't able to close her current account that day – because there were transactions due on it – but she told the member of staff serving her to transfer her savings to a savings account she had with N. She says she told the member of staff on several occasions not to transfer her savings via her current account as that would have meant her daughter would find out how much she had in savings.

A couple of days later Mrs L says she noticed that the transfer had been done via her current account. She complained to Lloyds Bank about her request being ignored – saying she thought it had been done out of spite – and about the new queueing system that Lloyds Bank had introduced and her extremely poor experience the day she went into branch. She said, amongst other things, that members of staff had been rude and aggressive.

Lloyds Bank looked into Mrs L's complaint and said that the member of staff who had served her had told her they were going to do the transfer via her current account as they'd had issues transferring directly from savings accounts to N before. Lloyds Bank also said that she was the only person named on her current account, so it didn't matter that the transfer had been done via her current account – no-one else was entitled to ask for information about her current account. In the meantime, Lloyds Bank said it was sorry to hear that Mrs L was unhappy with its new queueing system and that feedback had been provided. It didn't, however, agree that any members of staff had been rude or aggressive and said that concerns had been raised about her behaviour towards staff and other customers.

Mrs L was unhappy with Lloyds Bank's response and complained to our service. She was unhappy that Lloyds Bank had called her about her complaint while she was on holiday too.

One of our investigators looked into Mrs L's complaint but didn't recommend it be upheld. Mrs L was unhappy with our investigator's recommendation and asked for her complaint to

be referred to an ombudsman. Her complaint was, as a result, passed to me.

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.

Earlier on this month, I issued a provisional decision. In that decision I said the following:

"I can see that Mrs L has been a customer of Lloyds Bank for many years and has taken out a number of products with them. Based on everything I've seen, Lloyds Bank has never had a complaint about her behaviour before this particular visit. That suggests to me that on this occasion Mrs L genuinely felt she'd been let down. It is, of course, up to Lloyds Bank how its branches operate and from time to time it will make changes – some of which will be popular others of which won't be. But it's clear that the change to its queueing system wasn't something Mrs L appreciated – she found it unwelcoming and unprofessional – and from what I can see she wasn't the only one. It does look – based on the evidence I've seen – that this led to a relatively heated argument in branch.

From the evidence I've seen, I'm satisfied that Mrs L told the member of staff who was serving her to close her savings account – given how poor her experience of the queueing system had been that day – and to transfer her savings to a savings account she had with N. I agree with Mrs L that this is a straightforward request so there's no reason why Mrs L would have assumed this would involve her savings being transferred via her current account. I am, however, also satisfied that Mrs L and the member of staff talked about her savings being transferred via her current account. I'm satisfied that this was because the member of staff had had problems transferring money from savings accounts to N. In other words, I'm satisfied that the member of staff said that it would be better to transfer her savings via her current account. I think that they were trying to be helpful. That said, I'm satisfied that Mrs L made it clear that she didn't want this done – she wanted her savings transferred directly to N and not via her current account. In other words, I'm satisfied that Mrs L gave a clear and unequivocal instruction and that the member of staff should have followed this which they didn't. Based on the evidence I've seen, I don't agree the member of staff ignored Mrs L's instructions out of spite. Instead, I'm satisfied that the member of staff didn't want anything else to go wrong for Mrs L that day. Based on the notes I've seen, I'm satisfied that the member of staff in part wanted to help Mrs L and in part wanted to help themselves – they didn't want to have to deal with another complaint if the transfer went wrong. The fact that they didn't follow a clear and unequivocal instruction is, however, in my opinion the key here. I say that because I'm satisfied that transferring the money via Mrs L's current account has caused Mrs L distress as her daughter does from time-to-time checks her current account statements as she provides her with informal support. The next thing I have to decide, therefore, is what impact all of this had on Mrs L and what needs to be done to put things right.

I've spoken to Mrs L and considered everything both sides have sent in. I accept that Mrs L had a really poor experience when she visited her local Lloyds Bank branch. It's evident from the evidence that she wasn't the only customer complaining about Lloyds Bank's new queueing system. It's clear from the evidence that staff weren't happy with the new system either – it was angering customers who were normally kind and polite, to the point that some were coming in and apologising for being rude the week before. I accept too that Mrs L feels Lloyds Bank hasn't respected her right to keep her finances private – by which I mean how much she has in savings. Overall, I'm satisfied that these impacts mean an award of £300 in compensation is fair in this case. That's,

therefore, the award I'm minded to make."

Both parties were invited to comment on my provisional decision. Mrs L didn't think £300 was enough and said that it was a "low penalty" that "will not teach them anything" but suggested that she's accept it. Lloyds Bank didn't reply.

Putting things right

I can understand why Mrs L would like me to make a larger award as she feels £300 isn't penalty enough and won't teach Lloyds Bank anything. That isn't, however, what awards are meant to do. They're meant to compensate consumers for the impact that a business' unfair actions have had on them. I fully appreciate that Lloyds Bank's actions had consequences here – at a difficult time for Mrs L – as reflected in the call I had with her. I'm satisfied, however, that the award I said I was minded to make is fair in this case. So, that's the award I'm going to make.

My final decision

My final decision is that I uphold this complaint and require Lloyds Bank PLC to pay Mrs L £300 in full and final settlement to compensate her for the distress and inconvenience she's experienced.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs L to accept or reject my decision before 18 December 2025.

Nicolas Atkinson
Ombudsman