

## The complaint

Mr T complains about the service received from Lloyds Bank PLC (“Lloyds”) when trying to locate a historical account that he believes still holds funds in and is unhappy Lloyds hasn’t been able to locate the account or return the funds.

## What happened

Mr T found a Lloyds passbook dating back to 1971 showing a balance of £27.74 following a withdrawal of £100 on 17 November 1971. Believing Lloyds still held money in the account Mr T approached a branch of Lloyds in June 2025 about this.

Lloyds staff completed a search of its systems using Mr T’s name, date of birth, postcode, contact number and all previous addresses that might have been linked to the account but were unable to locate one. Mr T was advised to contact ‘My Lost Account’ who later confirmed on 23 November that no account was found.

Mr T was unsatisfied with this and so raised a complaint with Lloyds about this and brought his complaint to this service.

Lloyds explained that due to the age of the account, historical records are limited and may no longer exist and that despite a thorough search of its systems no active or historic account linked to Mr T was identified.

Lloyds advised that historically passbooks were not always required for withdrawals or account closures so having the passbook in his possession doesn’t necessarily indicate the account remained open. Furthermore, regulations require accounts to be closed after extended periods of inactivity and so it was possible the account was closed in line with this given the last recorded activity was in 1971.

One of our investigator’s looked into Mr T’s concerns but thought Lloyds had demonstrated that it had conducted a thorough and reasonable investigation covering all systems and historical records that could be linked to Mr T and as there was no evidence that the account still exists or that Lloyds holds any funds that it was highly unlikely any money remained.

Overall, they were satisfied that Lloyds had acted appropriately and taken all reasonable steps to investigate Mr T’s concerns and didn’t think Lloyds needed to take any further action.

Mr T rejected this on the basis that the passbook contained official bank stamps which he says are legal certifications of the balance by Lloyds staff and that an uncanceled, unclipped passbook in the hands of the depositor is evidence of a debt owed by Lloyds.

Mr T says Lloyds hasn’t provided evidence of a closing receipt or cancelled stamp to prove the debt was ever settled and that its inability to locate the account following the branch transfer and subsequent digitisation isn’t proof the funds don’t exist.

Mr T has asked for an ombudsman’s decision on the matter.

## **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.

I hope that Mr T won't take it as a discourtesy that I've described and condensed this complaint in the way that I have. Ours is an informal dispute resolution service, and I've concentrated on what I consider to be the crux of the complaint. Our rules allow me to do that. And the crux of this complaint is about the service provided by Lloyds in tracing Mr T's account. Mr T doesn't believe Lloyds have done enough to assist in the matter or that there is enough evidence to prove the account is no longer in existence.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) handbook requires a firm to make appropriate arrangements to enable a banking customer, so far as is possible, to trace and, if appropriate, to have access to a deposit held (or formerly held).

So the question I have to ask is has Lloyds done enough to assist Mr T in the tracing his historical account.

Having considered everything carefully - and I know this will come as a disappointment - I think Lloyds has.

Lloyds have shown that it has reached out to its Dormant and Inactive team and conducted extensive searches of its systems on the information Mr T has provided it with including all previous addresses that might have been linked to the account, but were unable to locate an account for him.

Given the time that has passed since there is evidence of the account being last active in 1971, I think it is likely that the account was closed not long after this. And with historical records being limited, I don't think it is unreasonable Lloyds has been unable to trace a historical account for Mr T or provide evidence of how or when the account was closed.

I appreciate Mr T believes the passbooks and information contained within is proof of the accounts existence and should be enough to trace it. But clearly this isn't the case as if it was something that could be used in isolation something would've turned up. And having a passbook doesn't prove an account is still in existence, all I think this shows is that it was in existence at some point in time. Especially when you consider passbooks weren't always required to be presented for withdrawals or when accounts were closed, as if this was the case one wouldn't be able to carry out such actions when a passbook has been lost.

I also think that if the account was still in existence Mr T would've likely been notified about the status of the account and any unclaimed proceeds – rather than it just being left dormant for over 50 years. And I would've thought Mr T to have received certificates of interest, indeed, for tax purposes these would've been required to be issued.

I'm also unable to say Lloyds have done anything wrong in not holding on to information or being able to access information on accounts dating back over 50 years - as it isn't legally required to do so. It wouldn't be fair to penalise Lloyds for not holding on to information or being able to produce information for a longer period than it is obliged to.

In any case Lloyds as well as conducting its own thorough search Lloyds advised Mr T how he could trace an historical account by directing him to 'My Lost Account' - both of which I consider appropriate actions and in-line with what I'd expect.

And so this being the case I can't say that Lloyds have provided Mr T with poor service in this regard or treated him unfairly and so I don't think Lloyds needs to do anything more to settle this complaint.

**My final decision**

For the reasons I've explained I've decided Lloyds Bank PLC have done enough to settle Mr T's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr T to accept or reject my decision before 21 May 2026.

Caroline Davies  
**Ombudsman**