

complaint

Mr L complains that Santander UK Plc placed a block on his bank account which led to five standing orders not being honoured and his accounts becoming overdrawn. Mr L wants Santander to pay him over £1000 in compensation.

background

Mr L contacted Santander on 30 March 2015 to provide notification of the transactions he would be carrying out over the following days. He asked Santander to contact him using his landline number if there were any security issues. Unfortunately, Santander did not note this on its system, so Mr L was not contacted as he should have been when the bank's security system flagged up a payment on 3 April 2015. It appears that Santander did try to contact Mr L on his mobile number but a possible security issue was highlighted with Mr L's mobile which led the bank to stop telephone contact. Mr L has since discovered that there was no block on his mobile so it's unclear what caused this issue.

Our adjudicator thought that instead of waiting for Mr L to get in touch with the bank, Santander should have made attempts to contact Mr L through alternative means – either by using his landline as requested, or in writing. Santander should have explained that a block had been placed on the account and asked Mr L to contact the bank to confirm whether the payment in question was genuine. Our adjudicator also thought that Santander should have been better at handling Mr L's complaint.

Santander acknowledged its shortcomings and agreed to pay Mr L £565.61 in compensation. This is a refund of the charges he's incurred as a result of Santander's actions and £500 compensation for the inconvenience caused. Our adjudicator thought this was a fair and reasonable offer, but Mr L he did not think it was enough, so the complaint has been passed to me for final decision.

my findings

I have considered all the available evidence and arguments to decide what is fair and reasonable in the circumstances of this complaint. I have reached the same conclusions as our adjudicator and for the same reasons. The facts and circumstances of the complaint have been set out in some detail in correspondence between Mr L, Santander and our adjudicator. I do not intend to repeat them here.

I can see that Mr L feels very strongly about this matter and with good reason. I can see that he did everything possible to alert Santander to the fact that various transactions would be taking place. He also made it clear that he wished to be contacted by landline. I fully agree that there have been shortcomings on Santander's part and that Mr L should be compensated as he has been put to a lot of inconvenience through no fault of its own.

I have considered Mr L's most recent submissions. I can understand his dismay and frustration at having his accounts become overdrawn, particularly as he says he has never been overdrawn over five decades. I have also considered Mr L's personal circumstances and I know he'll be disappointed with my decision, but I'm afraid that I agree with Santander and the adjudicator. I think the compensation offered by Santander is fair and reasonable in the circumstances.

my final decision

My final decision is to uphold Mr L's complaint. Santander UK Plc should pay Mr L £565.61 in compensation. (This is a refund of the charges Mr L has incurred plus £500 compensation for the distress and inconvenience caused).

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I am required to ask Mr L to accept or reject my decision before 7 December 2015.

Jagdeep Tiwana
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