

complaint

Mr and Mrs F complain that Skipton Building Society wrongly failed to transfer money from their account to a third party bank.

background

On 1 September 2015, Mr and Mrs F used the online banking facility to transfer £40,000 from the account they held with Skipton Building Society to a third party bank. This money reappeared in their own account on 2 September 2015, as a result Mr and Mrs F were not able to take advantage of an investment opportunity.

They tried to find out what had happened, but were not given an answer by the building society. Skipton has offered £25 compensation for its delay in providing an answer. Mr and Mrs F want more compensation for the loss they suffered and a proper explanation of why the money was returned.

The adjudicator did not recommend the complaint should be upheld. He said Skipton followed Mr and Mrs F's instructions and it was the third party bank who returned the deposit to their account.

Mr and Mrs F did not agree. They do not accept Skipton did everything correctly and believe there was a problem with its online banking system which caused the error. Mr and Mrs F say they were repeatedly lied to by Skipton when they asked for an explanation and believe the building society is now simply blaming the third party bank. They want a full explanation of what happened and compensation for the lost opportunity and time and effort spent trying to get answers.

my findings

I've considered all the available evidence and arguments to decide what's fair and reasonable in the circumstances of this complaint.

I have seen the documentation provided by Skipton Building Society, which includes information provided by the third party bank. I appreciate Mr and Mrs F's strength of feeling in this matter, but I am satisfied from all the information that I have seen, that Skipton properly carried out their instructions and transferred the money as instructed to the bank on 1 September 2015. I am satisfied that Skipton played no part in the decision by the third party bank to return the funds on 2 September 2015.

I understand that Mr and Mrs F want to be provided with a full explanation of what happened to result in their money being returned by the third party bank to their account.

I regret that I cannot provide that information. In considering this complaint, I have to decide whether or not Skipton made any mistakes which led to the return of the funds. I am satisfied the building society did not.

The funds were returned on 2 September 2015. I have seen the notes of the telephone calls between Mr and Mrs F and Skipton. I am satisfied these provide a contemporaneous summary of the discussions between them. At 12:50hrs on 4 September Mr F informed the building society there had been a problem and the funds had bounced back. Mr F was told

there was no issue with Skipton and the problem must therefore be with the third party bank and he was advised to try to make the payment again.

The building society records show it tried to contact Mr F twice, but could not get through. When it next spoke to him at 15:00hrs, Mr F said he had already missed the investment opportunity. He was again advised to try to make the payment again.

At 16:00hrs, I am satisfied Mr F was given misleading information from Skipton when he was told the mistake may have been as a result of two withdrawals being made. The building society has apologised for giving this incorrect information and sent a cheque for £25 as compensation for that.

I have to consider whether the building society's actions led to the lost investment opportunity. Not only am I satisfied Skipton sent the money as instructed, I am also satisfied that Skipton told Mr and Mrs F to try sending the money again as soon as it was aware of the problem. Mr and Mrs F were not given any misleading information until after they said they had already missed out on the investment opportunity. In light of that, I do not consider it reasonable to say Skipton was responsible for Mr and Mrs F's loss of the investment opportunity and it would not be fair for me to require the building society to compensate Mr and Mrs F for that. I consider the £25 compensation offered by Skipton properly reflects the mistake it made when an employee gave a wrong suggestion for why the money had been returned.

I understand Mr and Mrs F wish to be compensated for the expense and trouble they have gone to in bringing this complaint, but because I do not uphold this complaint, it would not be fair for me to ask Skipton to pay Mr and Mrs F's expenses.

my final decision

My final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr and Mrs F to accept or reject my decision before 29 February 2016.

Charlotte Holland
ombudsman