

The complaint

Mr H complains about various aspects of service provided by Lloyds Bank PLC (Lloyds).

What happened

Mr H has a current account and credit card from Lloyds. He's complained about several service issues which I set out:

Credit card: Mr H says he asked Lloyds to change the due date for payment on his credit card to 15th monthly. And that is when the interest should be debited. But as it is, the interest is being debited on 20th monthly.

Incorrect information given in branch about credit card balance: Mr H says he was given the wrong information by branch staff as to how much he had available to spend on his credit card. A transaction was then declined as a result.

Phone banking: Mr H says Lloyds' phone banking is only available between 08.00 and 20.00. This is inconvenient – when he may simply need a balance or transaction details. This should be an automated response service.

Exchange a one Euro coin: Mr H visited a branch of Lloyds to change a one-euro coin. He was told the bank don't exchange foreign coins and he had to go to a local tourist information centre to do that. He was with his mother at the time, who is frail and struggles to walk any distance – so this caused a good deal of stress for him and his mother.

Payment of bill in branch: Mr H visited a branch of Lloyds to make payment. The teller told him the account details didn't match. He went home and contacted the beneficiary to confirm his bank details were correct. The teller didn't advise him what to do, but just gave up. This caused him unnecessary travel time and expense.

Call from Lloyds complaints manager: He was called on 7 November 2023 by Lloyds' complaints manager but this was inconvenient – as he was leaving with his mother for an important doctor's appointment. Despite this, the manager just continued to talk and wanted to have a discussion. And – he doesn't know how Lloyds have his number as he hasn't given it to the bank.

Lloyds' wording in call report: Our service sent to him Lloyds documents they'd sent to us. In this a document contained a reference to Mr H 'bragging' about some compensation he'd received from a local authority. He says this is unprofessional and derogatory.

Mr H says Lloyds pay £60 per complaint and he worked out that compensation should be £442.20.

Lloyds sent a number of final responses to Mr H's complaints. Lloyds said:

Credit card: Lloyds said Mr H's statement is produced on 20th monthly and payments are due by 15th monthly. Interest is applied on or around 20th monthly.

Incorrect information given in branch about credit card balance: Lloyds apologised and paid compensation of £32, being £30 distress and inconvenience and £2 for call costs.

Phone banking: the bank said credit card phone banking is only available between 08.00 and 20.00 – the reason being that the credit card team deal with specific products, as opposed to general account information. Out of those hours, the phone line is closed. But Mr H's comments will be considered.

Exchange a one Euro coin: Lloyds said the bank don't change coins in foreign currencies. This was explained to Mr H when he visited the branch.

Payment of bill in branch: the reason the payment failed was that the payee's information given by Mr H was wrong – so the account details didn't match. Lloyds were satisfied the branch staff tried to help Mr H, but the payment couldn't be processed with the details he provided.

Call from Lloyds complaints manager: the bank listened to the call and Mr H said it wasn't a convenient time to discuss his complaint. Lloyds appreciated it wasn't always convenient to find a time to talk, but the call was kept short.

Lloyds' wording in call report: this was raised after Lloyds dealt with Mr H's complaint points. So the bank didn't have the chance to respond.

Compensation: this is considered on a case-by-case basis and there is no 'per case' amount. Because Mr H was paid £60 for a previous complaint, that didn't apply each time.

Our investigation so far:

Mr H brought his complaints to us. Our investigator didn't uphold Mr H's complaints and said Lloyds had done enough to deal with them.

Mr H didn't agree and sent further points to us – which I have included in Mr H's complaint summary above. His complaints have come to me to look into.

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.

Mr H has raised several points which I will look into separately under the same headings. I want to assure Mr H that I've considered all his points thoroughly and objectively.

I note that Mr H wanted to speak to me before I looked at his complaints. But – this isn't part of our process as we have a duty to review both sides of a complaint – from the point of view of both the firm and the customer. To do that fairly and reasonably, it is normally the case that an ombudsman reviews all the available evidence held in the file (including calls). In this case, I'm comfortable that I have all the evidence I need to properly come to a decision on Mr H's complaints without the need for a call.

Credit card: I can see that Mr H says that interest should be debited to his credit card account at the same date as when the monthly payment is due. I looked at his credit card statements. These show that the statements are issued on or around 20th monthly (e.g. statement issued on 21st January 2024). They then specify a minimum payment due on or around the following 15th of the next month (e.g. due by 15th February 2024). Interest is debited on or around 20th monthly (e.g. on 21st January 2024 – for the month up to 21st

January 2024).

On the statements Lloyds say: “*we calculate interest daily based on the total amount you owe. We add together all the daily interest amounts in each statement period and add the total to the balance on your statement date. The sooner you make your payments, even before the payment due date, the less interest you will pay...*”

So, Lloyds are operating Mr H’s credit card account in line with this. And – it’s typical of how a credit card operates. So, Lloyds haven’t done anything wrong here.

I asked Lloyds if Mr H can change the statement date to 15th monthly – and the bank said he can. But of course, that would then advance the latest payment date and the interest debiting date by five days as well.

Incorrect information given in branch about credit card balance: Lloyds have accepted Mr H was given the wrong information, even though they haven’t been able to validate this - but they’ve accepted his version of events and paid compensation of £32 – which I consider is a fair way to deal with this point.

Phone banking: I think it might be helpful to clarify what Lloyds and our investigator said here. Mr H has raised points about Lloyds’ phone banking service for credit cards. This is open 08.00 to 20.00, and customers speak to advisors. To clarify what Lloyds said in their final response – this is the case as they feel that trained advisers are needed to deal with credit card product queries – such as credit limits, amounts available as against purchases etc. So - an ‘automated’ service isn’t appropriate. That’s not something I can ask Lloyds to change – it is their commercial decision to deal with credit cards that way.

In contrast, I see that Lloyds ‘general’ phone banking number is available for general balance and transaction queries on an automated basis 24 hours a day. I hope that clarifies matters for Mr H.

Exchange a one Euro coin: I’m sorry Mr H and his mother were inconvenienced and I appreciate the difficulties they experienced. But Lloyds say that it is their policy not to change foreign currency coins, and I can’t ask them to change that. I would say that it’s common for most banks to have the same policy.

Payment of bill in branch: Lloyds explained to us that they carried out a ‘confirmation of payee’ (COP) check on the beneficiary of Mr H’s payment. This is standard banking practice – and ensures the payment is going to the right place, and serves to help prevent money being sent to the wrong account and (in some cases) stops fraud. The branch report says the COP did not come up with a match and they advised Mr H of this.

In such cases, it is for the sender to ensure the payee details are correct. The branch report says Mr H said the payee was a business account – and when that’s the case, the COP check will usually fail, and it’s reasonable that the bank asked Mr H to re-check the details.

Call from Lloyds complaints manager: Mr H says he hasn’t given Lloyds’ permission to call him. I asked Lloyds more about this and they showed us that they hold Mr H’s landline number in their records. And – they will usually try to discuss a customer’s complaint with them on the phone. That seems a reasonable way to deal with many of the complaints that customers may have – and most banks find it is a good way to do that. On this occasion, unfortunately the time wasn’t convenient for Mr H.

I listened to the call, and I consider it was dealt with reasonably by Lloyds' complaint manager. He explained he wanted to discuss Mr H's complaint and tried to give reasons why. Mr H then discontinued the call – and I understand why. But I didn't find Lloyds' manager to have been unreasonable here. And as the call only lasted less than a minute, I don't think I can fairly say Mr H was inconvenienced.

Lloyds' wording in branch call report: I saw the reference Mr H has brought up. In all honesty, I don't know why the staff at the branch recorded this in the report. I can appreciate that Mr H feels it was inappropriate. But, as an independent assessor, I can see it may have just been a record of what Mr H said – but equally, I can see the use of the word 'bragging' wasn't helpful or necessary. But I'm persuaded that this was simply a clumsy and unfortunate use of the word, and I don't think that of itself, it means I can ask Lloyds to pay compensation.

I appreciate that Mr H feels strongly about his complaints and will therefore be disappointed by my decision – but in summary, I do not consider Lloyds need to do anymore to settle Mr H's complaints, not pay any more compensation.

My final decision

I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr H to accept or reject my decision before 28 June 2024.

Martin Lord
Ombudsman