

The complaint

Mr L complains about issues in changing the name on his HSBC UK plc (HSBC) account and with setting up a Power of Attorney (POA). He would like £5000 compensation for the distress and inconvenience caused.

What happened

The details of this complaint are well known to both parties, so I won't repeat them again here. Instead, I will focus on giving the reasons for my decision.

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.

Having done so I have reached the following conclusions-

- I understand the name change and issue with the POA have now been resolved. The issue for me to decide if it is appropriate for any compensation for distress and inconvenience. Our investigator recommended £300 which HSBC agreed to. But Mr L doesn't feel that is enough as he has told us as a result of HSBC's actions he lost the family home.
- I appreciate both Covid – from HSBC's perspective and the limitations on Mr L's ability to communicate with the bank, hence the need for a POA, would have added to the complexity and time taken to deal with Mr L's issues. Whilst Mr L's personal situation is unusual it can't be one that HSBC hasn't come across before. It does seem to me to have taken some considerable time to change the name on Mr L's account and then there were issues setting up a POA. Although some delay seems to be down to Mr L not responding to what HSBC asked for in 2022 I think HSBC could have been more responsive to Mr L's situation and made it clearer what it needed to change his name. Similarly, had HSBC provided details of how to set up a third-party mandate in its final response letter of April 2023 this matter could also have been resolved sooner. I do think some compensation for distress and inconvenience is appropriate here.
- Mr L originally said he wanted £5000 compensation as delays from HSBC in setting up the POA meant he was unable to purchase his family home. Unfortunately Mr L hasn't evidenced this, or that the POA was the only issue preventing this. So I don't feel this is something I can take into account.
- In more recent correspondence Mr L has asked for £1000 for issues with the POA, £1500 for lack of customer care and £3500 for psychological harm caused as a result. I don't doubt the distress and inconvenience for Mr L in the length of time taken to resolve his name change and setting up the POA. I do agree that HSBC's customer care could have been better – given Mr L's situation I think its communications could have been quicker, more detailed and more responsive. I

can't however agree to the level of compensation Mr L feels is appropriate. He hasn't for example evidenced any actual financial loss as a result of HSBC's actions that I could take into account. Considering all the information that I have seen I think our investigator's recommendation of £300 compensation is reasonable to cover the distress and inconvenience to Mr L.

My final decision

My final decision is that I uphold this complaint

In full and final settlement HSBC Bank UK plc should pay Mr L £300 compensation.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr L to accept or reject my decision before 14 May 2024.

Bridget Makins
Ombudsman