

## The complaint

Mr J complains about misleading interest rate information on HSBC UK Bank Plc's banking APP which has caused him a financial loss.

## What happened

Mr J opened an HSBC online bonus saver account in May 2022 with a balance significantly in excess of £50,000.

He used HSBC's online banking APP to check and compare the interest rate applied. And this influenced his decision to keep his savings with HSBC. However, Mr J later discovered that the interest rate displayed on the APP only applied to the balance up to £50,000 and he feels he's:

- Been misled by wrong information
- Suffered a financial loss of about £3,000

Also, HSBC changed the APP display and Mr J considers that *'by changing the app HSBC are accepting it was not shown properly in the first place'*.

Mr J complained to HSBC, and they said that when he opened the account he would've read and agreed to the terms and conditions of the account including how the interest rates work. Also, they said the APP change was an enhancement and not because it had been incorrect.

Mr J brought his complaint to our service seeking compensation for his financial loss. Our investigator said, *'the app was misleading and led to Mr J experiencing distress and inconvenience, and I will be awarding £150'*.

However, Mr J remains dissatisfied and has requested an ombudsman look at his complaint.

## 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'm also partially upholding this complaint and I'll explain why. I'll focus on what I think are the important points to reach a final decision. But I've carefully considered all the points Mr J has made, even if I don't specifically address them all

From reviewing the file, I'm satisfied that HSBC would've told Mr J about the tiered interest rates his account would pay when he opened the account. So, although I appreciate Mr J subsequently started to look at the interest rate displayed on his APP, I think he ought to have been aware that two interest rates would apply to his account – one (a higher rate) for balances of up to £50,000 and another (a lower rate) for more than £50,000. And that these detailed interest rates, which I found to be clear, are available on HSBC's website. So, I don't think HSBC have misled Mr J here or given erroneous information.

Also, I'm not persuaded that HSBC's APP '*has precedence over the public website*' and I'm satisfied Mr J was made aware of where to find interest rate information and how to contact HSBC to confirm the current interest rate applied.

Mr J describes HSBC's APP as a 'common touchpoint'. Although I recognise display challenges due to limited APP space, I do think HSBC could've been clearer on how they display interest rate information. And, as I'm persuaded that this lack of clarity caused Mr J stress, I'm pleased to see that HSBC:

- Have made some enhancements
- Agreed with our investigator's view that, because of the stress caused, they will pay Mr J £150

So, having considered the above and all the information on file, I'm partially upholding this complaint against HSBC UK Bank Plc. And I require them to pay Mr J £150 compensation less any amounts already paid.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that I'm partially upholding this complaint against HSBC UK Bank Plc.

I require HSBC UK Bank Plc to pay Mr J £150 compensation less any amounts already paid.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr J to accept or reject my decision before 16 May 2024.

Paul Douglas  
**Ombudsman**