

The complaint

Ms Q complains that Halifax Share Dealing Limited (HSDL) failed to notify her of corporate actions affecting her shareholdings.

What happened

Ms Q says she first complained to HSDL in September 2022 about not receiving emails relating to her shareholdings.

Another complaint was raised in September 2023 when emails about a corporate action were received too late for Ms Q to take any action.

HSDL looked into what happened in September 2023 and said they passed on the information as soon as they received it. In this situation they received the information after the corporate action had happened so shareholders weren't given advance notice.

They also looked into emails sent since the account was opened. HSDL said emails had been sent to the registered address on each occasion and that there was no record of any bounce back or undelivered emails.

Remaining unhappy Ms Q brought her complaint to this service where one of our Investigators looked into what happened. They thought HSDL passed on the information about the corporate action as soon as it was received. They also explained that due to the size of the shareholding after the corporate action the terms of service allowed HSDL to keep the proceeds for their operating costs.

Ms Q disagreed saying that a previous investigation by HSDL had found a glitch in the system. She also asked to see a breakdown of all the corporate actions and notification dates, which was provided. Ms Q asked for some time to review the information provided and said she didn't feel all the points raised had been addressed.

Because an agreement couldn't be reached the matter has come to me for a 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.

Ms Q has provided a lot of information about this complaint and it's clear how strongly she feels about what happened. I want to assure Ms Q that I've read and considered everything that has been provided even if I don't mention it all in detail. I've summarised some things which reflects the informal nature of our service.

Where any evidence or testimony is contradictory, as some of it is here, I've come to a decision based on the balance of probabilities about what I think is most likely to have happened.

Ms Q was provided with a copy of the evidence about the emails sent by HSDL about

corporate actions since 2021. No response was received from Ms Q by the deadline set by our Investigator, so I've based my decision on the information I have available. Also, Ms Q said a complaint about this issue was originally raised in 2022, however no substantial information was provided from either party about this. So I've only considered the two final response letters from September 2023, one of which considered the email issue in general.

I've looked at the evidence provided by HSDL about the sending of emails to Ms Q since the account was opened. And having done so I'm satisfied, on balance, that the emails were sent to the registered address. I can't say why Ms Q says they weren't received however I'm satisfied they were sent and so by doing so HSDL have fulfilled their obligations.

In relation to the specific instance in September 2023 I'm satisfied HSDL passed on the corporate action information as soon as it was received. This was unfortunately after the date it became effective, but this wasn't the fault of HSDL.

I've also looked at the terms of service for the account about fractional shares. After the corporate action the value of the holding was estimated at £2.47 which was under the £5 limit. When this happens the terms of service allow HSDL to keep the fractional entitlement and set it against their operating costs.

Having carefully considered everything that happened I'm satisfied HSDL acted fairly and reasonably when dealing with Ms Q so won't be asking them to take any further action.

My final decision

For the reasons I've explained above, my decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Ms Q to accept or reject my decision before 30 July 2024.

Warren Wilson
Ombudsman