

The complaint

Mr S complains that Barclays Bank UK PLC lost a large sum of money which he believes was credited to his account.

What happened

Mr S has said that in 2011 he won a substantial sum of money. He said he arranged for it to be paid into his account at Barclays. But due to some challenging personal circumstances, Mr S said he wasn't able to take steps to trace the money until around 2023. However, upon doing so, he was told by Barclays that the only account it had found of his was closed due to dormancy in September 2012. It said the account contained around £4 at the time of closure.

Mr S wasn't satisfied with this. He told Barclays he was working with the police and the organisation he'd won the money through to help recover the funds.

Mr S asked our service to look into things, but the Investigator didn't uphold his complaint. She said Barclays tried to locate the money for Mr S, using all of the address and account information he'd provided, but hadn't been able to find it. She said she hadn't seen any evidence which persuaded her that Barclays had withheld the money or lied about the location of the funds. She said she hadn't found any evidence that the money had ever been credited to an account held by Mr S at Barclays.

The Investigator noted Barclays' offer to look into matters further if Mr S could provide any information that showed the funds were paid into an account he held with it. As such, she felt Barclays had done as much as it could to assist Mr S and didn't think it needed to do anything further.

Mr S asked for an Ombudsman's decision. He raised concerns that a family member had worked for Barclays and may have had a hand in the disappearance of the money. He also raised concerns about the competency of the police investigation.

The case was passed to me to decide.

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 won't be upholding this complaint. There is a substantial sum of money at the centre of this case, and I appreciate how distressing this news is likely to be for Mr S, so I've explained why below.

Broadly, my role is to decide whether Barclays did something wrong which caused Mr S to lose out as a result. If I'm satisfied that Barclays' failing meant Mr S has lost out in some way, I can then think about an appropriate level of redress to direct Barclays to pay him.

Mr S feels very strongly that a substantial sum of money belonging to him was credited to an account at Barclays in or around 2011. However, despite enlisting the help of other

organisations, as well as the police, he's been unable to provide our service with any evidence which shows that funds were credited during this time.

And, whilst I appreciate his concerns around Barclays, or its agents, acting dishonestly, I haven't seen anything which persuades me this is the case.

Barclays has shown our service the ledgers of the only account Mr S had around the time he says the money was credited. These documents show a balance of around £4, which remained unchanged during the period in question, with no debits or credits leading up to the account's closure in September 2012. There's also no evidence of his statements or account information being sent somewhere other than his main address, as listed on Barclays' systems.

And so I can't fairly say a payment of the size described by Mr S was credited to an account he held with Barclays in 2011. And so, despite Mr S' strength of feeling on the matter, I can't see that Barclays has done anything wrong here in its efforts to trace the money.

Our service is unable to conduct a criminal investigation into these matters, or look into the actions of the police. As mentioned, my decision focuses on Barclays, primarily how it went about tracing these funds. Whilst I'm truly very sorry to hear how distressing this has been for Mr S, and empathise with his situation, I must be fair to both parties – him and Barclays. And, without any evidence to persuade me that Barclays has done something wrong, or has otherwise treated Mr S unfairly, I'm unable to uphold this complaint.

My final decision

My final decision is I do not uphold this complaint

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr S to accept or reject my decision before 2 October 2024.

James Akehurst
Ombudsman