

The complaint

Mr D complains Santander UK plc (Santander) caused delays transferring his ISA to a new provider.

What happened

Mr D says in mid-March 2024 he completed an Individual Savings Account (ISA) transfer request with his new provider, and this was sent to Santander to facilitate the transfer on maturity in early April 2024. Mr D says he received notice from Santander it had rejected the transfer on 10 April 2024 as he had requested the current years subscriptions to be transferred, when he had only previous years subscriptions on the account.

Mr D says he then completed a second transfer request with his new provider, and this was submitted in mid-April 2024. Mr D feels on the basis of Santander's original rejection, this transfer request should also have been rejected as it stated it wanted the previous year's ISA subscriptions only, but this application was accepted, and the funds were transferred on the 25 April 2024.

Mr D says Santander were aware when he first submitted his transfer request in mid-March 2024 that there were no current year subscriptions for his ISA, so this should have been brought to his attention at that point and not delayed until maturity.

Mr D feels Santander have caused unnecessary delays in transferring the ISA to his new provider and as a result he has lost out on interest during this time of around £70. Mr D says this matter has caused him stress and worry as he was concerned there was an issue with his ISA and feels a suitable level of compensation for that and the time he has spent dealing with the matter should be £500.

Santander says it hasn't made any errors here as the original transfer request received from the new provider had been completed incorrectly, as it requested current year ISA subscriptions only, when there had been none. Santander says when it received the second transfer request from the new provider, it was actioned in a timely manner.

Mr D wasn't happy with Santander's response and referred the matter to this service.

The investigator looked at all the available information but didn't uphold the complaint. The investigator provided a timeline of the course of events and details of the transfer request which she says shows the initial transfer was to take place after maturity and to only transfer the current year subscriptions 2023/2024, of which there were none. The investigator also provided details of the second transfer request which asked for the previous tax years' subscriptions and all previous year's subscriptions and that was why the transfer request was actioned. The investigator felt from what she had seen, Santander weren't the cause of any delays in the transfer of the ISA to the new provider and the majority of the delay was down to how the initial form was completed.

Mr D didn't agree with the investigator's view and asked for the matter to be referred to an ombudsman for a final 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 won't be upholding this complaint and I will explain how I have come to my decision.

I can understand it would have been frustrating for Mr D to have the transfer of his ISA to his new provider delayed, when he believed he had completed the request correctly and in good time. When looking at this complaint I will consider if Santander were at fault for the delay in transferring Mr D's ISA to his new provider.

Both parties have provided this service with comprehensive details of the course of events here and while that has proved helpful, I won't be commenting on every point made as I don't feel it's necessary in order to come to a full and impartial decision here. That's not to say I haven't considered everything said – I have. But it's just that I don't need to comment on each individual point in order to reach a decision on what's fair and reasonable.

Mr D's complaint here is that Santander were at fault for the delay in the transfer of his ISA to his new provider and if there was an issue on the original transfer request, it should have dealt with that at the time and not waited until the maturity date to tell him. Mr D says this added to the time it took to complete the transfer.

Mr D also makes the point when the second transfer request was sent, asking for the previous year's ISA subscriptions to be transferred, on Santander's reasoning for the first request being rejected on this basis, this should have also been rejected but it wasn't. Mr D feels Santander are at fault for the delay here.

The first thing to say here is the ISA transfer forms are sent electronically by the new provider and the completion of those documents would not have been something Santander would have instigated, that would be the responsibility of the new provider. So, it's fair to say any errors contained in those forms can't be attributed to Santander here.

The investigator has provided a detailed timeline of events here so I won't replicate that, but there are some key points contained in that which I will expand upon. Firstly, Mr D is unhappy that the original ISA transfer request was submitted to Santander in mid-March 2024, and it should have been possible for it to have realised then the transfer form had been incorrectly completed, and not waited until the maturity date a couple of weeks after, before it informed him.

While I understand the point Mr D makes here, it's worth saying these forms are submitted electronically by the new provider and given that and the considerable numbers of requests Santander would undoubtedly receive around the end of the tax year, I am satisfied it wouldn't be practical for it to look at each application until the maturity instruction date – here 1 April 2024.

From the information I have seen and what is important here, is the original instruction sent by the new provider to Santander in mid-March 2024 requested the current year's (2023/24) subscriptions only to be transferred, but there weren't any because Mr D had funded his ISA in the tax year 2022/23. So, with that in mind I can't say Santander have made an error here as it acted on the instructions given and wrote to Mr D to explain this.

As far as the second ISA transfer request is concerned, from the information I have seen the request from the new provider was for the previous tax year and all previous tax years

subscriptions, so that is why this ISA transfer was actioned. It's not possible to know if Mr D provided both those instructions to his new provider or whether this was an error or misinterpretation by the new provider. While Mr D may not agree, what is clear is Santander weren't involved in the completion of those instructions, so I can't say it made a mistake here - after all it could only act on the instructions it was given.

While Mr D will be disappointed with my decision, I won't be asking anymore of Santander here.

My final decision

My final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr D to accept or reject my decision before 14 January 2025.

Barry White
Ombudsman