

## **The complaint**

Mr L complains that the service of FCE Bank Plc, trading as Ford Money, caused him distress and inconvenience when his funds were transferred to a new ISA.

## **What happened**

Mr L had a Ford Money savings account and, as this was expiring on 26 June 2023, he arranged for his funds to be moved to a new Ford Money Fixed Cash ISA.

Mr L expected to be able to see his new ISA and funds on 27 June 2023. This is because he received two emails - one saying that the old account was closed and the other saying that the new account had been opened and could be viewed online.

However, when Mr L logged on to Ford Money's online system at 0836, he couldn't see any record of the new account and his funds. Mr L explains that after becoming extremely anxious he decided to call Ford Money and he was informed the transaction would be posted later in the day.

Although this was the case, Mr L feels that Ford Money should have told him the transaction would go through sometime on the day of 27th June and, by not doing so, they caused him distress and inconvenience.

Mr L complained about this to Ford Money. Although they didn't uphold Mr L's complaint, they apologised for the confusion caused by the new account email and explained that:

- Whilst funds are moved internally new accounts are opened after 0900 on the maturity date.
- Their system is set up to send the emails prior to 0900 as this is when their system completes the transfers and opens new accounts.
- When Mr L called them, they had given him reassurance and confirmed he could view his new account and the transfer to his Fixed Cash ISA following maturity that morning.

Mr L was dissatisfied and complained to our service seeking an apology for the distress and inconvenience caused and £100 compensation. However, our investigator considered Ford Money's apologies and explanations to have put right something that caused minimal impact over a short space of time. And he wasn't persuaded that it would be proportionate, fair or reasonable to award compensation.

As Mr L remains dissatisfied, this case has now been referred to me to look at.

## **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.

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 not upholding this complaint and I'll explain why.

I should first explain that I can't tell a business to make alterations to their systems, services, procedures or processes. I say this because we aren't the regulator of the financial services industry.

I first looked at the Ford Money *'welcome to your new Ford Money account'* email and found it said, *'you can see your new Fixed Cash ISA 1 year account on your summary screen'* but didn't mention this wouldn't be immediately visible.

I also listened to Mr L's call with Ford Money and found that the representative, who I appreciate wouldn't have read the message, seemed to agree with Mr L that the account should've been available to view, or the message should've been sent out later.

Having reviewed the file and further considered Ford Money's *'welcome to your new Ford Money account'* email message, although I'm satisfied that it wasn't an error and think it reasonable for their system to update after 0900, I found the email to be misleading. However, as stated above I can't tell Ford Money to alter their email to prevent customer concern and / or manage customer expectations.

I then considered the impact of Ford Money's *'welcome to your new Ford Money account'* email on Mr L.

From listening to the call, which was a very short time after Mr L attempted to view his new account, I'm satisfied that the representative did reassure him that there was nothing to be concerned about.

Although it's clear Mr L had an understandable expectation that he should've been able to always see his funds and his new account once he received the email, I found that his comments and manner suggest the intention of his call was mainly to register his dissatisfaction over Ford Money's communications. And although he mentioned the possibility his funds might be missing, I think it more likely than not that from his comments and use of humour that he thought this was an unlikely scenario. So, I'm not persuaded that Ford Money caused Mr L distress here prior to them giving him reassurance.

I do recognise Mr L was caused some frustration and inconvenience in calling Ford Money. However, as stated in our guidance, financial services won't always be totally hassle free and it doesn't necessarily follow that we will always award compensation – especially when the impact is minimal.

Considering the circumstances and impact here together with Ford Money's clear explanation, quick apology, clarification and reassurance, I'm also not persuaded that it would be proportionate, fair or reasonable to award compensation.

Although I'm not upholding this complaint, I do think Mr L raises a valid consumer point about Ford Money's communication that I suggest they consider.

## **My final decision**

My final decision is that I'm not upholding this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr L to accept or reject my decision before 8 February 2024.

Paul Douglas  
**Ombudsman**