

## **The complaint**

Mr B complains as the holder of a power of attorney for Mrs P, that Lloyds Bank PLC wouldn't let him upgrade Mrs P's account online and that he could only do this by visiting a branch of the bank.

## **What happened**

In November 2022, Mr B attempted to upgrade Mrs P's saver account so that she could get a higher rate of interest. However he could not complete this online as it would only allow him to open an account in his own name. He had to visit the branch with Mrs P to complete the upgrade which caused him and Mrs P inconvenience. He believes that Lloyds Bank should change its policies to enable such accounts to be upgraded online. He is concerned that Mrs P would have been vulnerable to fraud if Lloyds had allowed him to open such an account in his own name.

Lloyds explained that its policies do not allow donor accounts to be upgraded online. Mr B could have completed the upgrade over the telephone or by going into the branch, which he did. He would not have been able to transfer funds from Mrs P's accounts into his personal account online.

On referral to the Financial Ombudsman Service our Investigator explained that as Mr B was not the complainant rather that he complained on behalf of Mrs P, he could only consider the merits of the complaint from Mrs P's point of view. He said that he couldn't ask Lloyds to change its policy so wouldn't be taking any further action.

Mr B said he appreciated that any compensation should be awarded to Mrs P and that any remedy would be for her benefit. He maintained that Lloyds' policy put her to inconvenience and vulnerable to fraud.

The matter has been passed to me for further consideration.

## **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 understand Mr B's complaint to be about the restrictions on him being able to update or open accounts in Mrs P's name online. He is concerned that he would have been able to open an account in his own name and that this would encourage fraud.

The position, as I understand it, is that Mr B would indeed have been able to open an account in his own name online. But he would not have been able to link it to any accounts held in the name of Mrs P without going into the branch, or by telephone. So I think that the restrictions placed on using the donor account online are actually to prevent fraud as to open or upgrade an account in Mrs P's name would have required additional identification in branch or over the telephone.

As it is Lloyds' policy to operate donor accounts in that way, I don't think it would be reasonable to ask it to change its policy. I note that it has fed back Mr B's comments in respect of any future review of that policy.

As I'm not upholding the complaint, I can't award compensation. As the upgrading could have been done over the phone, I don't think in any event that Mrs P needed to be inconvenienced.

### **My final decision**

I don't uphold the complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs P to accept or reject my decision before 28 November 2023.

Ray Lawley  
**Ombudsman**