

## **The complaint**

Mr P complains that The Co-operative Bank Plc ("The Co-Op") failed to properly account for his funds, resulting in a reduction in his balance.

## **What happened**

Mr P called The Co-Op to transfer funds to an account he held with another bank. During the conversation, Mr P asked for his available balance and when he was told what it was, he said he was missing about £900 from the total.

Mr P believed he had more funds in the account and together with The Co-Op call handler, they went through the various payments made from his account and Mr P was able to confirm all the payments from it were genuine. Mr P was asked if he could identify where the loss had come from but was unable to, but said he believed the account held more than it said it did.

Mr P made a complaint about the situation and The Co-Op investigated what had happened. The Co-Op examined the movements of funds into and out of his account but couldn't see any unusual payments that could account for the loss reported by Mr P.

Mr P brought his complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service for an independent review where it was looked into by one of our investigators. Information was provided by parties concerning the complaint. Mr P maintained that he'd lost about £900 from his account but couldn't be specific. He said the account balance was £900 higher a few days previously when he'd been in touch with The Co-Op about his account.

The Co-Op provided details of the account and all the recorded movements of funds both in and out.

There was an additional transaction unrelated to the £900 that The Co-Op identified they'd made an error with. This related to a cancelled direct debit that Mr P had requested but wasn't actioned. The Co-Op offered to refund this amount and pay £75 for this oversight.

Based on all the evidence, the investigator didn't think there was any evidence to suggest that the account had less money than Mr P claimed. It was also thought that the offer to refund the direct debit and pay £75 for this oversight was reasonable. Mr P disagreed with the recommendations and asked for an Ombudsman to review the complaint which has now been passed 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.

There are two complaint points here although Mr P has concentrated on the larger loss in his complaint. For completeness I'll deal with both. Firstly, the direct debit error. Mr P asked for

this direct debit to be cancelled and it appears that the full process wasn't carried out by The Co-Op at the time. They've since offered to refund this and pay £75 for the oversight which I think is a fair and reasonable way for them to deal with this.

Secondly, Mr P maintains that his account has been reduced by about £900. Having looked at the account in some detail, there are no unusual or unexplained movements of funds. All the payments from it are correctly accounted for. It would be unusual for an account balance to just change without a corresponding movement of funds. Without that, I can't say that the account had any less in it than the statements show.

I appreciate Mr P said he had more money in it some days earlier, but unfortunately the statements from his account don't show that. There was in effect, nothing for The Co-Op to investigate beyond establishing that his account had been operating properly.

So, as there's no evidence of any defect with how his account was operating or a specific payment he didn't recognise, I'm afraid I won't be asking The Co-Op to do anything concerning the loss claimed by Mr P.

### **Putting things right**

For The Co-Op to now refund (if they haven't already) the direct debit and to pay Mr P £75 for this oversight. To clarify, I don't uphold Mr P's claim that he's lost funds from his account.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that I uphold this complaint, in part, and The Co-operative Bank Plc are instructed to settle the complaint as outlined above, as per their earlier offer.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr P to accept or reject my decision before 30 January 2024.

David Perry  
**Ombudsman**