

The complaint

Ms S is unhappy that Barclays Bank UK PLC has refused to provide confirmation of her annual average account balance.

What happened

The circumstances that led to this complaint are well known to both parties, so I won't repeat them in detail here. But, in summary:

- Ms S's accountant has told her she needs to obtain confirmation from Barclays of her annual average annual account balance for tax year 2018/19 onwards as this has been requested from an overseas tax authority.
- Barclays used to send Annual Summary Statements to its customers which confirmed a number of things, including the average credit balance. But these statements were discontinued in 2018 and it is unwilling to manually calculate these figures for Ms S for subsequent tax years. But it paid £100 compensation to Ms S in recognition of the poor customer service it provided, and distress and inconvenience Ms S has suffered as a result, in relation to the way it handled her enquiry.
- Our investigator didn't recommend that the bank should do anything further to put things right. But Ms S disagreed, so the complaint has come to me.

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, and while I appreciate this will come as a disappointment to Ms S, I have reached the same outcome as the investigator for much the same reasons.

There is no regulatory obligation for the bank to provide the information in the format that Ms S has requested. And it's my understanding that, as the annual summary statements are no longer produced, the bank would have to manually calculate the annual average account balances for Ms S's three accounts. The bank is unwilling to do so because of the possibility that mistakes could be made in this calculation. This could have financial repercussions for Ms S which might then pose a risk to the bank.

Also, the bank has already provided the raw data relating to Ms S's account activity. The regular statements it issues confirm the individual transactions on the account and the account balance on the date the statement is produced. Ms S currently has her statement frequency set to quarterly. But she could change this to monthly or annually if that frequency better suits her needs. The information contained on the statements can be used by her and/or her accountant to calculate the historic annual average balances.

Ms S says the standard statements aren't suitable for her needs. I've seen nothing from the overseas tax authority that supports this assertion. But, even if such was provided, for the

reasons set out above I can't fairly instruct the bank to manually calculate the historical balances.

The bank made a number of mistakes while handling Ms S's enquiries including initially telling her it could meet her request. But I'm satisfied the £100 already paid represents fair compensation in all the circumstances of this complaint.

My final decision

My final decision is that I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Ms S to accept or reject my decision before 7 February 2024.

Ruth Hersey
Ombudsman