

## **The complaint**

Mr C is unhappy that Citibank UK Limited failed to provide him with a tax statement for his joint account with Mrs C. He also complains that when he requested it, he was given incorrect information.

## **What happened**

Earlier this year, Mr C contacted Citibank to request an annual tax statement as he explained this hadn't been sent to him. He says that Citibank incorrectly told him the account hadn't accrued any interest, so there was no tax statement to send to him. He then had to contact his relationship manager who initially sent the wrong tax statement, but he was eventually provided with the information he'd requested.

Unhappy with this, Mr C raised a complaint. He felt that if it wasn't for him insisting that he'd been given the wrong information, he could've been in trouble with the tax office. He said it wasn't the first time Citibank failed to send him a tax statement as he's had to contact them every year for the past few years to request it. He also expressed his worry about how he'd get in touch with Citibank for the tax statement again next year after they exit the market in the United Kingdom.

Citibank said they hadn't made an error. They explained that tax statements are automatically sent to the primary holder named on the account, in this case, Mrs C. They confirmed there were no discrepancies with the tax statements that were shared with Mr C. They also updated Mr C's email address as the primary email address to receive correspondence relating to the account, such as tax statements, as per Mr C's request.

Mr C referred his complaint to our service. Following this, Citibank made an offer of £100 as a gesture of goodwill. Our investigator said Citibank acted in line with the terms and conditions when sending the statements to Mrs C. But he thought they could've handled the situation better and thought that Mr C was caused distress and inconvenience by the customer service provided. He felt it was appropriate for Citibank to pay £150 in compensation.

Citibank disagreed with our investigator. They accepted they made an error but felt they'd offered fair compensation to resolve the case following the guidance set out on our website. They explained Mr C didn't have a monetary impact and they rectified their error immediately after Mr C raised it.

Mr C also didn't agree with the compensation amount of £150, as he felt it wasn't enough. He explained Citibank had breached the Financial Conduct Authority's Principle 6 and he didn't feel treated fairly. He explained Citibank had only offered compensation after he referred the matter to our service despite him spending around three hours trying to resolve his concerns.

He explained he wasn't complaining for the money, but to ensure Citibank treats other customers right and won't put anyone else in a position to declare incorrect taxes.

He asked to be adequately compensated for the time he's spent for something that should've happened automatically without him asking for it. He also felt the redress should consider the systemic failure over the past few years.

### **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.

The terms and conditions of the account explains that Citibank will send statements electronically. They also set out that for joint accounts, the statements will be sent or made available to the first named joint account holder.

I can see from the account statements that Mrs C is the primary account holder, so the statements relating to the account would be sent to her, rather than Mr C. This also explains why Mr C didn't receive the tax statements in the previous tax years.

Since Citibank have acted as per the terms and conditions of the account in how they send statements for joint accounts, I can't fairly say they've done something wrong in not sending the statements to Mr C directly.

That said, I agree Citibank have let Mr C down with the customer service they gave to him. I've taken into account the impact on Mr C to decide a fair amount of compensation. Having done so, I'm satisfied £150 compensation is fair and reasonable to recognise the distress and inconvenience Mr C was caused. I'll explain why.

There's no dispute between both parties that Mr C was given the incorrect information when he first asked Citibank for the tax statement. It was Citibank's responsibility to ensure their staff are aware of how their systems work and how statements are sent on joint accounts.

I can understand why being told the account didn't accrue any interest would've been confusing for Mr C. I don't think it was unreasonable for Mr C to have worried about the consequences here, as this could've resulted in him declaring his tax returns with the wrong information he was provided.

I'm pleased to see Mr C mitigated the impact on him by raising the matter with his relationship manager. I think it was reasonable to expect him to do so given that he was aware his account earned interest and had previously requested tax statements for the account. This meant Mr C was able to avoid any financial loss and penalties for declaring his tax returns inaccurately.

Mr C has indicated that the tax statement he was initially given was incorrect. At first, Citibank said they didn't find any discrepancies, but have since accepted he was sent an incorrect statement. Both parties agree that Mr C was eventually sent the statements he required via his relationship manager. Mr C also confirmed receipt of them a couple of days after he was sent the incorrect statement. I think experiencing further issues with receiving these documents would've added to the frustration, annoyance and inconvenience Mr C was caused.

I think Citibank missed an opportunity to address the concerns Mr C had raised around being given the incorrect information and the impact this had on him. I can understand Mr C's disappointment and why he feels like Citibank didn't care nor took his complaint seriously.

Looking at the timeline of events, it took Mr C just under two weeks to receive the tax statements he'd requested from his initial call to Citibank. While this is longer than I'd expect to see for a straightforward request, I don't think the delays were significantly prolonged.

Citibank have addressed Mr C's concern about the same issue cropping up next year by updating his email address as the primary email address on the account, so he should receive all statements relating to the account. Although, I understand that Mr C has now moved his banking elsewhere.

I accept Mr C was caused some degree of inconvenience in contacting Citibank in previous tax years to request a tax statement. I think Citibank could've done more to proactively inform Mr C about how their systems work which meant statements would only be sent to Mrs C. But I don't think the inconvenience to Mr C was more than you might expect when dealing with a financial organisation or carrying out banking activities. I think this is supported by the fact that Mr C didn't complain about Citibank not sending him statements much sooner.

I appreciate Mr C feels the compensation amount should be higher, but taking everything into account, I don't think the impact on him was significant enough to warrant further compensation. I'm satisfied £150 compensation is fair and reasonable under the circumstances.

### **My final decision**

For the reasons explained above, my final decision is that Citibank UK Limited should pay Mr C £150 compensation for the distress and inconvenience caused to him.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr C and Mrs C to accept or reject my decision before 26 January 2024.

Ash Weedon  
**Ombudsman**