

## **The complaint**

Mr W complains Santander UK Plc can't find a savings account he held previously with Bradford & Bingley (B&B) and won't pay him the balance of that account.

Mr W is represented by a family member, but as it's his account I'll only refer to him.

## **What happened**

Mr W found an old passbook for a savings account he'd held with B&B. The last update in the passbook was March 2008. Mr W contacted Santander in September 2022 to ask for the funds from the account.

Santander said their records showed the B&B account was transferred to Santander. This account was closed in February 2011, when the balance was moved to another Santander account. This Santander account was later closed in February 2014 and the final balance was paid.

Mr W was unhappy with this as he was sure he'd never asked for the account to be closed, had never received the balance of the account and was concerned someone had fraudulently withdrawn the funds. So he complained.

Santander responded to say, because of the amount of time that had passed, they'd already given Mr W all the information they held about his account.

Mr W wasn't happy with this response and referred his complaint to our service.

An Investigator considered Mr W's complaint. He said, in summary, he was satisfied Santander's records showed what they had already told Mr W, namely that his account was closed in February 2014 and the balance was paid at that time.

Mr W didn't accept the Investigator's findings. He said he is certain he has not received the money from this account. And that a further £5,000 had been paid in which, he says, was not paid in by him. Mr W also said he had no idea the account was even with Santander until September 2022.

As Mr W didn't agree, the complaint's been passed to me to decide.

## **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.

Mr W has provided evidence that he held an account with B&B. The passbook he's provided shows when it was last updated in March 2008 the balance was about £2,300.

Mr W is adamant he did not close the account and did not receive the balance of the account – he's provided current account statements to show no corresponding amount being

received in February and March 2014. Mr W is so certain because he says he has complete records of his finances going back to 1964 – so, if he had closed it himself and received the money, he would have a record of it. Mr W has also told us the only record he has of the B&B account is the passbook.

The existence of the passbook alone isn't evidence that the account wasn't closed or wasn't closed by Mr W or with his permission as the passbook wasn't necessarily required to make transactions on the account. So what I'd expect Santander to do in these circumstances was undertake the appropriate searches for Mr W's account. Based on the information they've provided, I'm satisfied they've done so here.

Santander's records show the original account that transferred from B&B to them was closed in February 2011, with the balance being transferred to another Santander account.

This Santander account was then closed, with a balance of about £7,500, in February 2014.

Mr W is concerned that Santander haven't provided information to show where the balance of the account was paid to, or how the account was closed. But I don't find this is surprising given the account was closed nine years ago. Santander are only obliged to keep information for six years, so while I understand Mr W's concern, they've not made a mistake by only having limited information available.

Mr W also wanted to know where the additional £5,000 had come from, as he doesn't think he paid this into the account either. He believes someone might have credited the account with the £5,000 as a precursor to then fraudulently withdrawing the funds. But again, because of the time that's now passed, Santander can't provide anything further about this.

I accept that Mr W has no record of the closure and can show he didn't receive the money into the account he's provided statements for. But this doesn't mean Santander have made a mistake. I've already explained that I'm satisfied Santander has done what I'd expect to locate Mr W's account. They've also explained that the closure and any transfer or withdrawal of the money would've been subject to security checks. So I've not seen anything, beyond Mr W's assertion, that the account was closed without his permission.

Taking everything I've seen into account, I've found Santander have treated Mr W fairly.

### **My final decision**

For the reasons I've explained, I don't uphold Mr W's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr W to accept or reject my decision before 31 August 2023.

Eleanor Rippengale  
**Ombudsman**