

The complaint

Mr H complains that Dudley Building Society destroyed the title deeds to his home.

What happened

Mr H had a mortgage with Dudley Building Society. When the term of the mortgage ended, he asked it to send him the title deeds for his home, which he believed it had kept for him. Eventually, Dudley Building Society told him that it had destroyed the deeds.

Mr H said he was looking forward to receiving the title deeds for his home. He said his home is over 150 years old and the deeds are valuable to him because of his home's history. Although money can't replace the loss of the deeds, he wants Dudley Building Society to compensate him for the loss.

The investigator thought Dudley Building Society's offer of £100 compensation was fair and reasonable. Mr H did not accept what the investigator said.

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.

Dudley Building Society said that since 2003 the Land Registry held title deeds electronically, so it took the decision to no longer keep paper title deeds. That was a reasonable decision by Dudley Building Society. And I have not seen any evidence that Mr H has been caused any financial loss because of that decision.

In saying that, Mr H did have a reasonable expectation that Dudley Building Society would keep the title deeds safe for him. And the deeds clearly meant a lot to him. But in all of the circumstances, I consider that Dudley Building Society's offer of £100 is a fair amount to reflect the upset Mr H suffered when he discovered the deeds had been destroyed and any inconvenience he's had in pursuing this matter.

My final decision

Dudley Building Society has already made an offer to pay £100 to settle this complaint and I think the offer is fair in all the circumstances. So my decision is that Dudley Building Society should pay Mr H £100.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr H to accept or reject my decision before 10 November 2023.

Ken Rose
Ombudsman