

The complaint

A company, which I'll refer to as T, complains that ClearBank Limited made errors when opening the company's business bank account which led to the wrong company name being registered.

What happened

ClearBank partners with Tide to provide accounts for its customers. In the events in this complaint, all the communication and branding was in Tide's name, so in the wording of my decision I'll refer to Tide where it seems more natural. In doing that, I don't intend anything material – for the avoidance of any doubt, the only respondent in this complaint is ClearBank.

T applied for a Tide business bank account. As part of the account opening, the bank offered a company registration service. T used that service, but shortly afterwards complained that the bank had registered the wrong business name with Companies House.

Tide said that it wasn't responsible for any error. However, it acknowledged that it should have given more information in its response to T's complaint, so it apologised and offered £50 to resolve the matter. T wasn't satisfied and referred its complaint to us.

Our investigator concluded that the bank didn't need to do anything further. He said the available evidence showed that Tide wouldn't have been able to input the name of the business or to amend it. Information about the new business would have been given by the customer, and the bank would only have forwarded the information to Companies House.

T didn't agree with the investigator's conclusion. Its director said the bank hadn't explained why the wrong name had been registered – it was the name of a previous company which he'd recently changed. He thought the onus was on Tide to prove that he'd specifically requested that name.

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 that, I've reached the same conclusion as the investigator, and for largely the same reasons.

I can see on Companies House records that six weeks after the company was registered by the Tide process, the company name was changed to T. So I've no reason to doubt that the name first registered was one that the company didn't want. But whatever had gone wrong, I don't think the evidence shows it was Tide's fault.

I've seen details of Tide's online application process, including screenshots, and they support Tide's argument that the bank wouldn't be the one to input the company name. Moreover, there's a stage in the process where the company name intended for registration

is checked against the names of existing companies – to avoid attempting to register a duplicate – and the name is clearly shown on screen to the customer. There's also a stage at the end of the application during which all the information from the previous stages is shown to the customer for review and confirmation.

T's director has said Tide needs to show evidence that he specifically requested the disputed company name during the application process. Tide says evidence showing that specific stage of T's online application isn't available, though it has provided the information record that it holds from the application, which shows the same company name as it was registered in the Tide process. But in any event, I'm satisfied that it would have been the customer, not Tide, that would have provided the company name, and that Tide would simply have passed the name through in its registration process. I'm also satisfied that the company name that Tide intended to use for registration would have been clear to the customer during the online application.

For these reasons, I don't find that Tide made any error that caused the wrong company name to be registered.

Tide has already made an offer to pay £50 to T for shortcomings in its response to the complaint. T should contact the bank direct if it now wishes to accept this.

My final decision

My final decision is that I don't require ClearBank Limited to do anything further to settle this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask T to accept or reject my decision before 15 January 2024.

Colin Brown
Ombudsman