

## **The complaint**

Mr M has complained that there is a significant discrepancy between the current 'book cost' displayed for three of his shareholdings on his Barclays Bank Plc (Barclays) portfolio, compared to what he originally paid.

## **What happened**

Mr M purchased several thousand pounds worth of shares across the three shareholdings in question, between 2013 and 2018.

In February 2022, Mr M raised concerns with Barclays that the book cost displayed on his portfolio for certain shareholdings was significantly different to that he paid and what he was expecting it to be.

Barclays responded to Mr M and acknowledged a previous issue when their platform migrated from Barclays Stockbrokers Limited (BSL) to Smart Investor (SI) in August 2017. This meant some book costs were not showing correctly. Due to the amount of time that had passed, Barclays weren't able to say whether this had impacted Mr M.

Barclays say they have recognised that some of Mr M's book costs are calculated using a previous method and not the way they currently calculate them. They say they have offered to update this. They also paid Mr M £100 for the handling of the complaint and in particular some unsuccessful calls with Mr M.

Mr M wasn't happy with this and brought his complaint to our service for an independent review. Our investigator looked into it but she was satisfied with the response given by Barclays and that the book costs were being calculated correctly.

Mr M remained unhappy. He said that there was still a discrepancy, and that Barclays were making the process more complex.

As no agreement was reached, the case has been passed to me for a decision.

## **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, I have come to the same conclusion as the investigator that Barclays have acted fairly. Let me explain why.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge how frustrating this will have been for Mr M. If he is an investor that likes to use and review book costs, and he has lost faith in those calculations, I can see why he would be unhappy.

It is important to note the book cost is calculated using the number of shares and the book value (assets if the company was liquidated less liabilities). This is different to the market value that Mr M would receive. Which takes into account other factors such as expected

earnings of the company. Barclays are correct that book costs should be used as a guide and I wouldn't expect them to be relied upon for investment decisions or tax purposes.

However, I have gone on to consider the reasons behind any discrepancies. Firstly, Barclays have explained a lower book cost for the March 2016 purchase of shares in 88 Energy, is due to multiple sells of the stock.

There is a discrepancy in the book cost for the April 2016 purchase of ITV PLC shares, since the migration from Barclays Stockbrokers to the Smart Investors platform. However, Barclays say they have made this clear to Mr M previously and offered to amend it. The difference they previously calculated to be approximately £60.

Barclays have also provided an explanation regarding the book cost for Mr M's Glencore shares. A previous holding from 2013 was sold in February 2018. More shares were purchased that month for £774.50, a book cost at the time of this complaint was showing as £712.95. Barclays have said this is due to *"capital repayments that have been made every six months following the corporate event impacting the book cost"*. I am satisfied with the explanation they have given.

Barclays has also confirmed that they are still willing to manually correct any figures. An offer I can see they made in writing in February 2022, further to a telephone conversation. I think this is fair and Mr M can contact them if he wishes for them to do this. Barclays have also paid Mr M £100 for poor service they say they gave him and in particular their handling of calls with him. This amount doesn't seem to be in dispute by Mr M and it was paid some time ago. It seems fair and appropriate for the impact these had on Mr M and I won't be asking Barclays to do anything further here.

In summary, I am satisfied that Barclays have done enough here. They offered some time ago to manually update the costs for Mr M. They have compensated him fairly for any miscommunications and service issues and I am satisfied with the answers they have given for any previous discrepancies in the book costs.

### **My final decision**

My final decision, for the reasons set out above, is that I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr M to accept or reject my decision before 16 January 2024.

Yoni Smith  
**Ombudsman**