

## **The complaint**

Mr A is unhappy that Santander UK Plc delayed the opening of a savings account he applied for or with how Santander administered the late opening of that account.

## **What happened**

On 12 October 2022, Mr A applied online for an e-saver account with Santander. But Santander didn't open the account for Mr A until 22 October 2022. Mr A wasn't happy about this. And he also wasn't happy that he couldn't access his account until he'd received online banking details from Santander, which were only posted to him after his account had been opened and which weren't received by him until 31 October 2022. So, he raised a complaint.

Santander apologised to Mr A for the late opening of the account and made paid £50 to him as compensation for any trouble or upset he may have incurred. Mr A wasn't satisfied with Santander's response and felt Santander should change how they administer the account. Mr A also wanted Santander to reimburse interest he would have received had he deposited £50,000 into the account for three months. So, he referred his complaint to this service.

One of our investigators looked into this complaint. But they felt the response Santander had issued to Mr A's complaint already represented a fair outcome to what had happened. Mr A remained dissatisfied, so the matter was escalated to an ombudsman for a final 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'd like to begin by confirming that this service isn't a regulatory body or a Court of Law and doesn't operate as such. This means that it isn't within my remit here to declare that Santander have or haven't acted in a non-regulatory or unlawful way.

Instead, this service is an informal, impartial dispute resolution service. And while we do take relevant law and regulation into account when arriving at our decisions, our remit is focussed on determining whether we feel a fair or unfair outcome has occurred – from an impartial perspective, after taking all the circumstances and factors of a complaint into consideration.

Santander have accepted that they didn't open the e-saver account for Mr A as quickly as they should have done, and they've explained that this was because of an influx of account applications which caused the processing of some applications to be unfortunately delayed. Santander have apologised to Mr A for this and have paid £50 to him as compensation.

Mr A is unhappy that, after submitting his application on 12 October 2022, it was only on 31 October 2022 that he was able to access his account. But, while it's clear a portion of the time Mr A wasn't able to access his account was the result of Santander's delay in opening the account, it's also the case that because Santander's account opening process involved sending online banking details to successful applicants by post, Mr A would never have been able to access his new account as quickly as he would have liked – because he would

always have had to wait for the receipt of those posted letters.

Mr A isn't happy that Santander's process includes that internet banking details are posted with a three to five working day timeframe for the receipt of those letters. But I'm satisfied that how Santander choose to administer the opening of their accounts is a commercial decision that Santander are entitled to make. And I feel the explanation that Santander gave to Mr A about this point – which is that Santander don't send internet banking details electronically because of potential information security concerns – is reasonable.

Mr A also thinks Santander should reimburse him for interest he would have received had he deposited £50,000 into the account for three months. But Mr A chose to close the Santander account on 2 November 2022 – shortly after he first logged into it on 31 October 2022. And during the time Mr A held the account he only ever made one deposit into it – for £1.

As such, I don't feel that there is any reason why Santander should reimburse Mr A interest on an amount he never actually deposited into the account for a period of time far greater than that which Mr A chose to keep the account open. And I also note that, given that Mr A didn't deposit £50,000 into the account, that this £50,000 would have been accruing interest elsewhere. And I'm satisfied that it wouldn't fair that Mr A should accrue interest on this amount twice, as I feel he's effectively suggesting here.

Ultimately, I'm satisfied that the only point of error for which Mr A should reasonably be compensated here is that Santander delayed the opening of the account for approximately a week. But I'm also satisfied that the £50 Santander have already paid to Mr A already provides fair compensation to him for any trouble or upset this delay may have caused. And I say this in consideration of the impact that the delay may have had on Mr A, as well as in consideration of the general framework by which this service considers compensation amounts for trouble and upset – details of which can be found on this service's website.

All of which means that I feel the response that Santander issued to Mr A's complaint already represents a fair outcome here. And it follows from this that I won't be upholding this complaint or instructing Santander to take any further action.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr A to accept or reject my decision before 24 August 2023.

Paul Cooper  
**Ombudsman**