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## **MONEY BOX LIVE**

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**LEWIS:** Hello. More than 2.5 million customers complained to their bank in the 12 months to the end of June. The number's lower than previous years, but 2011 saw a major onslaught on the banks by the Financial Services Authority. It fined five major banks and one building society a total of £38 million for various failings in how they treated at least some of their customers. It's the first time so many banks have been fined so much for this kind of offence. Of the major high street banks, HSBC was fined £10.5 million, RBS Group a total of £9.1 million, Barclays £7.7 million; and HBOS £3.5 million. A major source of complaints to banks was for Payment Protection Insurance as people tried to recover the premiums on a product they should never have been sold in the first place. But overdrafts are also a source of annoyance. Ten days ago Money Box revealed the high cost of unauthorised borrowing on a current account. Charges of more than £80 to go overdrawn without permission by £100 were common and we got hundreds of emails setting out the high cost of small mistakes. Savings rates of course another source of complaint: why are new customers treated so much better than old and indeed loyal ones? So today Money Box Live is taking your questions about banks and banking. Do you love your bank or hate it? Have you had problems or 40 years of uninterrupted good service? Whatever your question, call Money Box Live now: 03700 100 444. Trying not to say that too quickly in response to an email I've just received. With me today to answer your questions: Michelle Slade, who is Media Manager from Nationwide - Britain's, indeed the world's biggest building society; Craig Donaldson is Chief Executive at Britain's newest bank, Metro Bank, which is just about to open its tenth branch; and

Richard Lloyd, Executive Director of the consumer organisation Which? And our first question is from Jim who's calling us from Angus. Jim, your question?

**JIM:** Hi. I understand that the banks with PPI insurance have more or less given the money back, but in the event of them incurring a very heavy fine - I mean you're talking about millions of pounds for HBOS for doing something wrong for their customers - does any of that money find its way back to the customers or is it just taken from the bank and given to the Government?

**LEWIS:** Yes, it doesn't go to the Government actually. Who's going to start? Richard?

**LLOYD:** Well, first of all, it's good to see the Financial Services Authority getting its act together just before it's abolished and actually fining banks properly, although I have to say Jim there's a real disproportion between the amount that they're fined and the huge scale of say the PPI scandal - £9 billion of mis-sold insurance. All of that hasn't gone back to the consumers.

**JIM:** (*over*) Who actually benefits from the fine?

**LLOYD:** The fine goes back to the FSA and in the end that's a smaller cost for the banks that have to pay a levy into the FSA to help pay for it. So in the end, indirectly, it does get back to more consumers.

**JIM:** Oh right.

**LEWIS:** Yes, to consumers. I did actually ask the FSA this just this morning, Jim, and they told me that the money does go to the FSA; it does reduce the amount they have to take off the banks, as Richard said. But if a bank has been fined, it doesn't get that reduction in its next year's levy. So HSBC fined £10.5 million. It won't get a reduction in what it pays the FSA next year, so in a sense it's fair. Whether any of that finds its way back to customers of course is a slightly moot point.

**LLOYD:** Well I suspect they get it off us in other ways, Paul.

**LEWIS:** (*laughs*) Probably. Craig Donaldson, you're from Britain's newest bank. I don't suppose you've been fined yet. Are you pleased to see banks being called to account more by the FSA?

**DONALDSON:** Absolutely, banks have to be accountable for what they do; and if they do something that they shouldn't do, they should be fined and fined (as you said) appropriately. And no, I don't expect us to be fined, and I take offence at the word 'yet'. (*laughter*)

**LEWIS:** Well we'll see, we'll see. And, Michelle, I'm not sure Nationwide has ever been fined, has it, by the FSA?

**SLADE:** Not as far as I'm aware, no. We had a very small number of people that actually had complaints about PPI. Our provisions are very low, in the millions ...

**LEWIS:** (*over*) Compared with the ...

**SLADE:** Yeah, compared to other banks. So, yes, we've come off quite well in that.

**LEWIS:** Those fines I mentioned of course weren't about PPI. They were about other things and mis-selling investments principally. So two of the good guys here apparently. So they say, anyway. (*laughter*) I hope that answers your question, Jim.

**JIM:** It does. Thank you.

**LEWIS:** Thanks very much for your call. We're going to Elizabeth now in North Yorkshire. Elizabeth, your question?

**ELIZABETH:** My question is this. I'm on jobseeker's allowance and hen I purchased my home insurance, I could only afford to do it on a monthly direct debit.

My bank, along with a lot of other institutions, seem to charge what to my mind are exorbitant interest rates for that - something in the region of 28%. Given that inflation is around 5%, I'm wondering how the banks and other organisations can justify such a high level of interest.

**LEWIS:** So instead of paying your insurance all at once, you pay it monthly, and to do that they charge you, you say, 28% in interest on that?

**ELIZABETH:** About that, yeah.

**LEWIS:** Yeah, that sort of amount. That does seem a lot. Michelle Slade?

**SLADE:** Yeah, I mean obviously you know if you can't afford to pay it all at once, then there is that option to pay it over a monthly direct debit. There is an ongoing cost of course in managing a policy if it has to be paid each month, so that's pretty much why the additional instalments are added onto that policy.

**LEWIS:** Yes, but I mean 28% sounds a lot. Sorry, Richard first.

**LLOYD:** It sounds really steep. And, Elizabeth, you know this is a very competitive market, home insurance, and you know the first place I would look would be a comparison site. I mean I know you're stuck with what you're being hit with at the moment, but you ought to be able to get a better deal than that if you shop around.

**LEWIS:** Yes and some of them do let you pay by instalments and not charge you and you could just see if that would be cheaper. Craig?

**DONALDSON:** Elizabeth, move. Vote with your feet and go somewhere where you'll get a better deal because there are definitely better deals out there and I can't see how anybody can justify 28%.

**LEWIS:** Right. It's quite hard to change insurance in the middle of a year though,

isn't it? Sometimes you don't get ...

**DONALDSON:** *(over)* Well if you're paying that much interest, you can break it in the middle or monthly and just stop the payment.

**LEWIS:** Okay.

**ELIZABETH:** Thank you.

**LEWIS:** Tough advice there. Perhaps move your bank account, which perhaps we don't do often enough. Thanks for your call, Elizabeth. And while we're on the subject actually - Elizabeth said she'd been unemployed - this is an email from Claire who says, 'After finding myself with no job in April, I had no support from my bank after numerous calls and visits to the branch. They were very quick to charge me when I made an error and very slow to pay me back.' She then goes on to say she's opened a credit union account and left the banking system altogether, which she's much happier with. Richard, I'm going to get you to comment on that, I think. Credit unions, do they offer everything a bank offers? Only some of them, I think.

**LLOYD:** Well they can't offer everything yet, but some are increasingly offering a wider range of products and often of course at the moment you have to have saved with them before you can take out a loan, for example. But I think the thing here is people are increasingly looking for better customer service from banks, credit unions, building societies, whatever, and you know there is a very big difference between especially the biggest banks and the smaller, the local, the credit unions and so on. So if quality of service matters to you, again you know you should vote with your feet, as Craig said, and go to somewhere that's going to treat you like a decent human being.

**LEWIS:** Yes and with unemployment up again today and the figures we heard this morning, Craig Donaldson, people who come to you with perfectly good credit records, decent incomes suddenly find themselves in difficulties, what do you do? How can you make sure that they don't get into trouble?

**DONALDSON:** What we ask is they talk to us, so we can work together. If we know what's happening and the customer knows what's happening, we can try and structure things and make sure that there aren't any surprises for either party. And that's what disappoints me with the email you just read out - the fact that that person was trying to hold a conversation. It sounds like they did the right things and it's very disappointing that the bank didn't work with them.

**LEWIS:** So tell them right away.

**DONALDSON:** Absolutely.

**LEWIS:** Michelle, I presume you'd agree with that?

**SLADE:** I would, yes. I mean Nationwide, when you were saying about service, Nationwide's number one for service on the high street and ...

**LEWIS:** Craig is laughing at that. (*laughs*)

**SLADE:** I know he is, but to be honest we are. And one of the things that we do look at is if customers do get into difficulty - then yeah similarly we like to work with them. You know if you let us know, we will work with you. And if it is (like she says) just a one-off, a minor blip, then we have an automatic refund if you let us know.

**LEWIS:** Sure, but if you do become unemployed, you've got regular payments going out for all sorts of things. It may be not inevitable, but very likely you'll go overdrawn without permission. There are hefty charges for that even at Nationwide, aren't there?

**SLADE:** There can be sort of you know penalties for going over, but obviously you know you have to look at that and if you speak to us then we can put some sort of payment plans in place. I mean obviously I think if you know you are going to be unemployed, then maybe also speak to the providers of your services for those regular payments and see if there's something you can do there to help sort that out as well.

**LEWIS:** Yes and perhaps move to a basic bank account, which I know all the banks do offer.

**SLADE:** Yes basic bank accounts, yeah.

**LEWIS:** Sorry Richard, you want to come back.

**LLOYD:** Well a big worry for us at Which? is that a lot of people in that situation then turn to payday lenders and other really high cost sources of credit. And you know it really is good advice - talk to your bank first, see if you can arrange an authorised overdraft if that's something you think you're going to need - and look out for those very, very high charges that you'll get hit. What might seem a good deal for a few days over Christmas actually in particular if you roll your payday loan over can become fabulously expensive.

**LEWIS:** Yes, I suppose the problem some people feel though is if they've got a reasonable income coming through, they probably bank online, they never go into a branch. They don't know where the branch is to have "a relationship" with. Is it always sensible to try and go in or ring up to try and talk to a human being about it rather than an automated system?

**LLOYD:** It is. And grim though it may sound, there are customer relationship managers springing up in the major banks now. They are starting to try and make more of an effort to talk to you properly when you've got a problem and it really is worth getting in early with that. And you know for online bankers, you can email in as well and do that 24/7. So it is worth doing.

**LEWIS:** Tell them early because things are not going to get better, they're only going to get worse. Sorry Craig, yes you want to come back.

**DONALDSON:** I was just going to say you know very similarly for me banks want to work with customers on the whole, and if we can make it work together by

knowing earlier and avoiding surprises everybody's happier.

**LLOYD:** And just one other thing, Paul.

**LEWIS:** Briefly.

**LLOYD:** Which? rates customer service across all the banks. We find the online providers consistently score the best for customer service.

**LEWIS:** Okay, that's interesting to know. Anyway Claire has made her own decision: she's gone to a credit union. Thanks very much for your email, Claire. I hope that was an interesting little debate you stirred up there. Andrew is next in Southport. Andrew, what's your question?

**ANDREW:** Well I've been with the same Barclays Bank for over 45 years. I offer them absolutely no problems on credit and yet they charge me over 17% to use my limited approved overdraft. How on earth can they justify it?

**LEWIS:** Right, have you used the overdraft?

**ANDREW:** Yes, occasionally.

**LEWIS:** Yes. I think 17% is probably at the low end for an overdraft. What do you charge at Nationwide?

**SLADE:** Ours is 17.9, so yes ours is around the same ballpark, yeah.

**LEWIS:** (*over*) There we are, same amount. And why is it that high? Bank rate is half a percent. Why do you charge - I know Andrew isn't your customer, but customers like Andrew - 17.9%?

**SLADE:** Well there is a cost actually for obviously running bank accounts and for

most people their account is free you know for everyday day to day banking, but obviously if you do have to then borrow the money then there is a charge. You know if we charge around that though, you know depending obviously how much you give over, actually you know it can work out cheaper than maybe some of the people that charge a daily fee instead as a charge.

**LEWIS:** Yes because of course the charges don't stop with interest, do they? There are fees. Craig?

**DONALDSON:** I was going to say we're 15% and for me an overdraft is about the flexibility and the variability. If you need money over a longer time, there are a lot of cheaper ways to borrow. An overdraft, you pay more for the flexibility and the ease of use. You know you can get loans. You know we charge 7.9% for loans, so if you want a structured long-term debt, there's a lot cheaper. So the high rates as they're put are actually more for the flexibility and ease of use and that's what you're paying for.

**LEWIS:** And you only have it for a short time, so it's not over a year.

**DONALDSON:** Exactly.

**LLOYD:** I mean the fact is these charges are just way too high. They're very, very hard to compare across the market. Consumers constantly tell Which? it's a complex, difficult to compare part of their banking. There's got to be more transparency about this. People need to know what the rules are, when they're going to get hit with charges for going overdrawn. If you do think you're about to go in the red though, as we were saying earlier, you should contact your bank and see if you can arrange an authorised overdraft first.

**DONALDSON:** Can I just ask something? What's difficult about 17.7 and 15?

**LEWIS:** We think they're just too high.

**DONALDSON:** But they are pretty transparent and pretty clear.

**LLOYD:** Well what's not clear is when you're going to get hit with the charges. Obviously you can find out the rate, but it's what the rules of the game are and they're not comparable across the market. That's why people can't compare one bank with another.

**LEWIS:** Well there is some...

**ANDREW:** *(over)* Can I add?

**LEWIS:** Yes, Andrew.

**ANDREW:** It's the fact that they actually only give you 3.25% if you actually leave some money with them. It seems an immense difference between that deposit interest and the charge they make when you actually need to borrow a spot of cash.

**LEWIS:** So your complaint is not that it's not clear. It's that it's just too high compared with the interest they pay you and of course the bank rate.

**ANDREW:** The differential, yes.

**LEWIS:** Why is it so high? Craig, I mean you say yours is "only" 15% and I know some banks do charge more than that. But why is it 15% when it doesn't cost you that much to borrow the money, does it? You can borrow it for 1%.

**DONALDSON:** Well we don't borrow it. We raise it through customer funds that we pay out on and then you've got the cost of, like Michelle said, running the accounts.

**LEWIS:** Sure, but you're not paying your savers 15%, are you?

**DONALDSON:** No. The costs are bang on and it's the flexibility. There are far, far

cheaper ways. Like I said, you can get a loan of 7.9% if you want to structure it and have a structured repayment vehicle.

**LEWIS:** Okay.

**DONALDSON:** So you're paying for the flexibility.

**LEWIS:** One way you can compare accounts - there is something called overdraft charging scenarios which are laid down by the Office of Fair Trading, and if you put that into a search engine you'll find them all. In fact I've got Nationwide's and Metro Bank's here by coincidence. (*laughter*) And you do, both of you, charge for bouncing a payment, for example, don't you? Why do you charge that? It doesn't cost you anything, does it?

**DONALDSON:** It does, yeah.

**LEWIS:** What as much as you charge?

**DONALDSON:** No. So we charge £5 for bouncing the payment and we have to contact the customer. We contact the customer both on the day that we bounce the charge and the end of the month and then again when we take the payment 21 days after the end of the month. So that's why we charge.

**LEWIS:** And then a £15 paid item charge for each one that requires unarranged funds. Two items, a charge of £30.

**DONALDSON:** For up to 6 items in a month.

**LEWIS:** It's these charges ... I mean we did a story on overdrafts a couple of weeks ago and we've had so many complaints about the high cost of very small mistakes. You know you go overdrawn by a small amount and you're penalised. Michelle?

**SLADE:** Yeah, I mean our customers have told us though that they would rather that we paid the item and then you know they had a charge than actually didn't pay the item at all and then have them have the embarrassment of having that payment missed. And there obviously is you know the risk that obviously if a customer is getting into unauthorised overdraft charges that they're not going to actually pay that back, and that obviously has to be factored into the charge as well.

**LEWIS:** Yes. And how easy is it if you've gone overdrawn without permission to do what Craig suggested and talk to the bank and say okay, I'd like a loan instead? Does that happen at Nationwide?

**SLADE:** It does, yes. I mean you know assuming the person's got an adequate credit record, they're going to be accepted. Then that's fine, you know we will obviously offer them.

**DONALDSON:** Could I also say ...

**LEWIS:** (*over*) Just briefly if you would.

**DONALD:** ... call the bank and have a discussion. If it's a one-off occasion, if you've run the account well, you know we would waive the fee because things happen.

**LLOYD:** In the end people know the charges are way out of proportion to the costs of running the overdraft and banks need to do much more to alert people when they're going into the red - text messages and so on.

**LEWIS:** That's coming, isn't it, I believe?

**LLOYD:** Yeah, absolutely.

**LEWIS:** And of course I can hear a lot of our listeners shouting at the radio now

saying, “Yes, but if you don’t charge people for overdrafts, you’ll be charging all of us who run our accounts properly”, which is a big complaint we get.

**LLOYD:** Well I think the kind of rates that we’re getting on our balances and our current accounts, we’re actually getting charged anyway all of us.

**LEWIS:** Okay. Andrew, I hope that discussion answers your question to a certain extent. Thanks very much for your call.

**ANDREW:** Yes, thank you.

**LEWIS:** Thank you. Jane now in Staffordshire, what’s your question?

**JANE:** Hi. My son has learning difficulties. He went into our branch, RBS, with a piece of paper that had my bank details on it and his account number written on the bottom. He was trying to memorise his bank account details. He handed over the piece of paper and the bank teller suddenly emptied my account, gave it to my son. He went out, spent all of it but £60. When I discovered, I got rather angry. The bank have said, “Yeah, yeah, it’s our problem.” They’re expecting me to go up and down the high street taking back the things that he had bought, so that I can take the money back and put it back in my account. He was left shaken and upset about the way he’d been treated.

**LEWIS:** I’m sure. And, Jane, just tell me, you didn’t give any authorisation for him to take the money out?

**JANE:** No, not at all.

**LEWIS:** And did he not intend to take it out?

**JANE:** No, he wanted the money out of his own account.

**LEWIS:** So it was the bank's mistake in your view completely?

**JANE:** Oh yes. The bank have said that and the bank have paid ... It was what I call my bills account and the bills were due the next day, so yeah I got rather fractious.

**LEWIS:** Well I'm sure you did because they wouldn't be paid because there was nothing left in the account.

**JANE:** Well the bank paid in enough to cover all the bills.

**LEWIS:** Right.

**JANE:** But I'm left now thinking do I have to pay them back? What happens next?

**LEWIS:** Richard Lloyd?

**LLOYD:** Well you should really be complaining and if you don't get a decent answer out of the bank, you should go to the Financial Ombudsman Service. This is an outrageous mistreatment of you in this situation and I think you know you'd probably get a good chance of having that complaint upheld if you took it to the Ombudsman Service.

**JANE:** Oh good.

**LEWIS:** Yes, I mean the first thing to do is to write - Richard, I'm right, aren't I? - you write to the bank making a complaint. They eventually write back saying no, assuming they do say no, and at that stage you take it to the Ombudsman.

**LLOYD:** Yes.

**LEWIS:** Which costs you nothing, I should say to Jane.

**LLOYD:** You must always complain to the bank in the first instance. Then they should acknowledge your complaint within 5 days. If within 8 weeks you're not satisfied with the outcome, then you should go to the Financial Ombudsman Service. And, incidentally, the Ombudsman holds up a lot of complaints - about half of all complaints they uphold - at an independent assessment of your case.

**LEWIS:** And Michelle, I know we mentioned this case before we came on air and we were all shocked that this would happen in the first place. But will Jane get any compensation apart from getting her money back hopefully?

**SLADE:** She may well do, yeah, as a gesture of good will. Then you know hopefully they would be able to get some sort of compensation back, but obviously that's a question for RBS really.

**LEWIS:** Okay.

**JANE:** I'm not interested in compensation.

**LEWIS:** No, no, but ...

**JANE:** It's the way my son was treated with highly special needs.

**LEWIS:** Sure.

**JANE:** This is how they treat people.

**LEWIS:** Yes, I mean there are issues about that which we've had many emails about over the years, about people with special needs not being treated properly by banks. And it is a difficult balance, isn't it Craig, because they have to have autonomy and yet they have to be protected from themselves in some way?

**DONALDSON:** But this one shouldn't have happened.

**LEWIS:** No, no, this was a clear mistake. I think that's plain.

**DONALDSON:** You have to protect people's data protection and you know make sure their money's safe, but on this occasion deep apologies on behalf of banking on that one, I think.

**LEWIS:** Yes. So I think, Jane, you've both been very badly treated and I think you assure your son it was absolutely not his fault, it was the bank's fault, and you should get your money back and possibly a bit of compensation and certainly an apology, I would have thought. So good luck with that ...

**JANE:** Thank you.

**LEWIS:** ... and go to the Ombudsman if you don't get what you want direct from the bank. John next in Carmarthen. John?

**JOHN:** Hello. Mine's the other side of the Ombudsman: I didn't win my case. I had a dormant account with Barclays. And I've had a long-term illness, so far 29 years. I moved house twice and lost most of the paperwork, but I found a statement and then started to trace the account. Went to Barclays and initially they were very helpful. It wasn't the same branch that I'd lost the money from. And then they started throwing paperwork about and kept asking me the same question I'd already answered and they went on and on and on, so eventually I went to the Ombudsman. The bank manager had been in court for being naughty, but the Ombudsman found against me because once you've had an account for 6 years without a statement, then you can say goodbye to the money if somebody has lost it.

**LEWIS:** Well yeah there's certain puzzled looks here and that's not my understanding of the rules at all. I thought ... Well I'm certain that the money remains yours whatever happens to it. Craig?

**JOHN:** That's what I thought.

**LEWIS:** Craig?

**DONALDSON:** That's my understanding as well, I have to say. So I don't know the specifics of what you're saying, but I genuinely think it's your money. You've put the money into Barclays. It is your money and if you can prove that through the statements, then you should be getting that back.

**JOHN:** But the statement was over 6 years old.

**LEWIS:** But I don't know that that's an issue.

**JOHN:** The Ombudsman has said the passbook is not sufficient to show that the account remained open ...

**LEWIS:** That's absolutely true, the passbook isn't because something else might have happened. But if the bank hasn't said to you well you've got the passbook but in fact this money was taken out by you and you've forgotten, that's a different matter. But if the money hasn't been taken out, then it's yours. Richard?

**LLOYD:** This sounds to me like the Ombudsman has looked in a very narrow way at this particular case and you know I'd have thought for Barclays it would be ridiculous of them not to look at you again, reopen your complaint, take your case up and see if you can get a different result.

**LEWIS:** The problem for the banks being - I don't want to appear to be speaking for them - but the problem for the banks is that passbooks were phased out and everything became sort of ...

**JOHN:** It's a statement, not a passbook.

**LEWIS:** Oh it's a statement, okay. I suppose the statement itself isn't proof that the money wasn't taken out subsequently, but is that what Barclays is claiming?

**JOHN:** Well I suppose so. The problem is in this day of electronics, you'd have thought they could keep accounts open forever.

**LEWIS:** Well the truth is, as we all understand it, that if the money has remained not taken out by anybody, then it is yours and you can get it back. So it seems to be a dispute about that. But let's leave it at that if we can, John, and it's a rather puzzling one for all of us. Ian in Chichester is next.

**IAN:** Hello Paul.

**LEWIS:** Ian, hello. What's your question?

**IAN:** I have emailed you and you will know that whilst there are side issues, this is a matter which has arisen because my son's direct debit instruction apparently dropped off his Nationwide credit card account without any notification from Nationwide Card Services. That is how a Nationwide Card Services customer services adviser advised my son on Saturday morning. Whilst that in itself is unsatisfactory, the main thrust of my complaint concerns the fact that Nationwide made some thirty intimidatory, intrusive, computerised telephone calls to my wife and me from early on Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December until and including last Monday 12<sup>th</sup> December with a similar number of computerised telephone calls being made to my son who, having been fortunate to obtain a graduate appointment, is not normally able to make personal calls during the working day. Whilst none of these sixty plus calls should have been necessary, we recently consider them to be disproportionate. They create harassment and aggravation and, one has to say, a certain amount of stress and they're of Nationwide's own making.

**LEWIS:** Okay. Well, as you know, we've got Michelle Slade from Nationwide here. And, Michelle, I've had other complaints about different banks about these computerised calls to try and get back money that no-one's disputing is owed but it's the method that is in dispute. When do you do this and how often do you call people up?

**SLADE:** Okay, well the amount of times that we call people up varies, so it depends on once it comes into the system of the collections team. There's kind of a level, so if somebody maybe has got a number of accounts and you know this is the first time it's really happened, you know they've always been a regular payer before, then they're likely to get less calls and you know not be called so often; you know right through to the other end where if somebody's got numerous accounts and you know they're in credit problems, then we obviously feel there is a bigger problem so we're going to call them more often to try and get action.

**LEWIS:** And does calling people by automated calls four times a day get action?

**SLADE:** Well I mean to be fair the idea is that obviously we're leaving messages saying who it is that's calling and asking them to contact us to sort out the issue. We obviously want to work with customers to sort out the problem.

**LEWIS:** And what about ... I mean I think, Ian, your main complaint, at least your principal complaint really is that these carried on after the debt had been settled?

**IAN:** Yes. Obviously Nationwide won't take instructions from me and I can't sort of provide personal information. Nor do we know whether the calls, which obviously were from Nationwide, but at the time we didn't know whether they were scam calls.

**LEWIS:** No, sure.

**IAN:** But having obtained a graduate appointment, my son can't ... you know he's not permitted to use his phone for personal matters during the working day ...

**LEWIS:** Sure, so ...

**IAN:** ... and it's hard enough to obtain a graduate appointment.

**LEWIS:** Just to be clear. Sorry, I must hurry you because we're coming towards the

end of the programme and I want to squeeze another call in if we can. But you're saying these went on after the debt had been settled. Just let Michelle just answer that.

**SLADE:** Yes, I mean we've looked into this and unfortunately it was a human error from our part that somebody didn't actually make the right mark onto the system, so that once the payment ... The payment was being processed, so once it had gone through, the calls stopped, but while it was going through a mark should have been made to stop the calls and unfortunately that didn't happen in this case.

**LEWIS:** So it didn't happen.

**SLADE:** It didn't, no.

**LEWIS:** So an apology to Ian and his son.

**SLADE:** Yes, sorry for that.

**LEWIS:** Thanks very much for your call, Ian. Richard, just briefly you wanted to add something to that.

**LLOYD:** Well yeah, there are rules about this - what is a reasonable volume of calls in this situation. It seems to me four a day is unreasonable and I think Nationwide and other banks that are bombarding people in this way should think again and people can complain to the regulators about that.

**LEWIS:** Okay and complain to the Ombudsman if you get nowhere. Dorian?

**DORIAN:** Yes.

**LEWIS:** Dorian in West Yorkshire. Very briefly, Dorian, if you would, because otherwise I'll be in big trouble.

**DORIAN:** Okay. I just want to know if I've been offered a payout by my bank on 15<sup>th</sup> September, but I haven't received any money yet.

**LEWIS:** Oh this is a Payment Protection Insurance claim.

**DORIAN:** Yes.

**LEWIS:** Yes and this is with which bank?

**DORIAN:** Lloyds.

**LEWIS:** Lloyds, okay. Well I have to say, Dorian, we've had a lot of complaints about delays with payment payouts on payment protection from Lloyds. Richard?

**LLOYD:** Well this is really widespread. There are a lot of people, Dorian, waiting for this money. I would be on the phone to Lloyds asking them where this is. I think though you're in a lot of company. There's a lot of people here that are waiting for this payout. You should get it. If you don't get it within the time frame that the rules are saying the bank should pay, then again complain to the Financial Ombudsman Service.

**DORIAN:** That's what I couldn't find - what is the rules within which time they should pay out.

**LEWIS:** I think they've got a voluntary agreement once they've agreed the payment to pay it within 4 weeks, and I think Lloyds are not meeting that because they are the biggest of these banks and they have a big backlog. But we may be looking into this further in a future Money Box, Dorian. Thanks for your call. I'm going to have to bring it to a close now because that's all we have time for. Goodness, there's so many of you still waiting to speak and so many of you have emailed, but that's all we have time for. My thanks to Richard Lloyd from Which?, Michelle Slade of Nationwide, and Craig Donaldson of Metro Bank. Thanks for all your calls and emails. Links on

our website, [bbc.co.uk/moneybox](http://bbc.co.uk/moneybox) - particularly to the Financial Ombudsman Service. Just click on the symbol for this programme. I'm back at noon on Saturday with Money Box and I'm back here to take more of your calls on Money Box Live next Wednesday afternoon. Subject: long-term care.