

## **The complaint**

Mr A and Ms B complains that Barclays Bank UK PLC closed their current account.

## **What happened**

Barclays have told us Mr A and Ms B opened a current account when living in the UK but later moved to a country within the European Economic Area (EEA). Mr A has a loan and used their bank account to make payments.

Following the Brexit vote and changes to legislation, Barclays wrote to Mr A and Ms B to explain it had taken the decision to close their account. Barclays sent Mr A and Ms B letters confirming its decision and requesting they make other banking arrangements.

In April 2021 Mr A contacted Barclays and was given information about its decision to close his account. Mr A raised a complaint, but Barclays closed it without offering any resolution.

Despite further contact, Barclays closed Mr A and Ms B's account.

Mr A and Ms B referred their complaint to this service and it was passed to an investigator. They didn't agree that Barclays had acted unfairly by closing the account but recommended a payment of £75 to reflect the distress and inconvenience caused by the way Mr A and Ms B's complaint was handled. Mr A's loan account was later sold to a third party.

Mr A and Ms B asked to appeal, so their complaint has been passed to me to make 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.

I understand Mr A has concerns about his Barclays loan. But in this decision, I'm only able to deal with issues concerning Barclays decision to close the current account. I understand Mr A's loan payments were debited from the current account and have taken this into account.

As Barclays and the investigator have both set out, changes to legislation and regulations following Brexit meant Barclays took the decision to close Mr A and Ms B's account. Barclays has explained that as a result of the UK leaving the EU it couldn't provide accounts to the majority of customers with addresses in the EEA.

Whilst I understand Barclays' decision impacted Mr A and Ms B, as a business it's free to decide what services to offer customers. In this case, Barclays says it took a commercial decision to close their account following Brexit and I'm satisfied that's the case. I understand Mr A and Ms B feel this step was unfair, but I have to consider the account terms and conditions. They say Barclays can close an account for any reason by giving 60 days' notice.

Barclays wrote Mr A and Ms B in November 2020 giving them notice of its intention to close their account. It sent a follow up letter in January 2021 providing a further warning of its intention to close their account. Another letter was sent in April 2021. I'm satisfied Barclays gave notice in line with its account terms that it intended to close Mr A and Ms B's account.

Mr A has told us he's unhappy Barclays failed to provide guidelines about what would happen and that they didn't receive its letters. I've seen copies of Barclays' letters and they are address in line with the information Mr A and Ms B have given this service. The addresses used appear to be correct. I note Barclays' letters contain guidance concerning the decision to close accounts and what would happen next. I'm sorry to disappoint Mr A and Ms B but, on balance, I'm satisfied Barclays did write to them about its decision to close their account and gave sufficient warning in line with the account terms. I haven't found that Barclays has treated Mr A and Ms B unfairly by closing their account.

Barclays agreed to pay Mr A and Ms B £75 for the way their complaint was handled in April 2021. In my view, that's a reasonable way to resolve this complaint and fairly reflects the distress and inconvenience caused to Mr A and Ms B. As a result, I'm going to proceed on that basis and award Mr A and Ms B £75.

### **My final decision**

My decision is that I uphold Mr A and Ms B's complaint and direct Barclays Bank UK PLC to pay them £75.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr A and Ms B to accept or reject my decision before 9 June 2022.

Marco Manente  
**Ombudsman**