

The complaint

Mr J is unhappy with Monzo Bank Ltd's account closure process.

What happened

Mr J confirmed to Monzo via the in-app chat on 10 September 2022 that he wanted to close his account due to service issues. This was following a number of days of chat that started with Mr J querying the replacement card fee and then waiting to hear if he needed to leave £1 in his account as a shareholder. Monzo replied later that day asking Mr J to 'tap' here to verify his identity, saying once he had done that he could close the account in the app, or it could do that for him. But by this time Mr J had messaged Monzo again saying he was deleting the app.

Mr J called Monzo two days later. He said he could not re-install the app as he no longer had a smartphone so Monzo explained he could email the identification verification that it needed to close his account, this should be a clear picture of himself, or a video, that also showed his ID. Mr J did not want to do this saying there must be many other ways it can verify his identity that do not involve apps or videos. Mr J asks for £25 compensation for the time this has taken and for his account to be closed.

Our investigator did not uphold Mr J's complaint. She said Monzo's terms allow it to charge for the replacement card. She found Monzo had offered Mr J two ways to close his account – either in-app or via email with an image and ID. This would be the same for all customers closing an account. She explained that not all internal processes would be documented in the terms and conditions. Overall, she concluded Monzo had acted fairly toward Mr J.

Unhappy with this assessment, Mr J asked for an ombudsman's review. He said the charge for the replacement card was not part of his complaint – it was the catalyst for him deciding to close his account. He said the investigator gave contradictory information about the closure process and did not address the key point that closing his account in the app was not an option that was available to him. He says Monzo's procedure for account closure is in complete contrast to its published terms and conditions – and it is reasonable that he should follow the terms rather than an unseen internal document.

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 am not upholding Mr J's complaint. I'll explain why.

I think Monzo had made it consistently clear in the in-app chat that Mr J could 'tap' to verify his identity to start the account closure process. He opted to delete the app before doing this. I do note Monzo's replies were not always timely, but it acknowledged this, and I find its intention was always to help. After Mr J explained he no longer had a smart phone and so needed another option, Monzo explained he could email with a photo or video clip of him holding proof of his identity. I think this is reasonable. And we would expect the bank to

ensure the request for account closure was coming from the account holder. I accept Mr J did not like this option, but Monzo is a digital bank, and he was aware of this when he opened his account.

Mr J said in his response to the investigator's assessment that we have not consider that the in-app closure was not an available option for him. But from the in-app chat history I have reviewed I cannot see that was the case. It only ceased being an option for him in the evening of 10 September when he opted to delete the app. Prior to that point, going as far back as 2019, Monzo had told Mr J to 'tap to verify' if he wanted to start the process to close his account. In its submission to this service Monzo flagged that Mr J had another open complaint about access to the app ongoing but that has not been in the scope of this investigation. Mr J did not mention this on his complaint form and Monzo had not completed its investigation or issued a final response letter when he brought his complaint to our service.

Mr J made the point that Monzo's account closure process is in complete contrast to the terms. But I disagree. Its section on 'Closing your account' in the terms and conditions tells account holders that want to close their account to 'please get in touch with us'. It doesn't set out what will happen then and I don't think it's unreasonable that the terms don't set out the subsequent operational procedure in full.

It follows I have found no failings on the part of Monzo. Mr J wanted compensation for his wasted time and I acknowledge he has spent time on this issue, but I think there are steps he could have taken that would have reduced the inconvenience he has felt and so am not making any compensatory award. I also cannot order it to close his account as he requested. He would need to comply with its ID verification request.

My final decision

I am not upholding Mr J's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr J to accept or reject my decision before 9 March 2023.

Rebecca Connelley
Ombudsman