

## **The complaint**

Mr B complains about a delays to an account closure with Barclays Bank UK PLC.

Mr B also complains about the service he received when trying to close the account and transfer the funds.

## **What happened**

In July 2022 Mr B received a letter from Barclays advising him of the requirement to close his account. Barclays said this was due to the implications of Brexit and as he was living abroad.

Mr B says he attempted to call Barclays eight times over the space of two months to arrange the closure, but the Barclays advisors he spoke to failed to help him do this. Mr B also says he sent a closure request by letter, but this wasn't actioned. So, Mr B logged a complaint with Barclays.

Barclays upheld the complaint and started to make transfers out of Mr B's account to his account abroad. Barclays also offered Mr B £200 compensation, but Mr B remained unhappy. Mr B said the compensation was lower than he'd accept, and the transfers were being made at the bottom exchange rate for the day it was sent.

Mr B went on to say that it took around three months to make the final payment, after Mr B and Barclays attempted to send it and it failed. So, Mr B bought his complaint to our service.

Our investigator looked into the complaint and thought the compensation should be increased. Our investigator found the currency conversion rate used needed to be recalculated to make sure it was correct, and she also suggested increasing the compensation amount from £200 to £300 for the trouble and upset the delay had caused.

Mr B didn't agree with the investigators view. He said the compensation wasn't high enough and asked for the complaint to be escalated.

So, the complaint's been passed to me 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.

I'm very aware that I've summarised this complaint briefly, in less detail than has been provided, and in my own words. No discourtesy is intended by this. Instead, I've focussed on what I think is the heart of the matter here. If there's something I've not mentioned, it isn't because I've ignored it. I haven't. I'm satisfied I don't need to comment on every individual point or argument to be able to reach what I think is the right outcome. Our rules allow me to do this. This simply reflects the informal nature of our service as a free alternative to the courts.

Having considered the submissions in full and from both Mr B and Barclays, I agree with the outcome the investigator reached for largely the same reasons. I'll explain why.

There's no doubt that a delay was caused in closing Mr B's account by Barclay - Barclays have admitted that and offered compensation. So, I don't need to make a finding on whether there was a delay and who caused it. But I do need to make a finding on whether the compensation was fair in the circumstances of the complaint.

Mr B has supplied a lot of information, and I thank him for that. I've read through it in its entirety, but most seems to be establishing how many calls were made to Barclays and when. For the completeness of the investigation, I'm satisfied that eight calls were likely made. So, when thinking about compensation amounts, this was my starting point, as well as the other issues he said he faced.

It's also clear that there was a delay of around two months from the point the account should've been closed, and the money sent to Mr B's account abroad, and around three months for the final payment (the recalculation of exchange rate) to be finalised and sent.

Having considered the delays, and the phone calls Mr B had to make, I'm satisfied that the £300 total compensation the investigator suggested fairly compensates Mr B for the trouble and upset it caused.

Mr B hasn't suggested the money was to be used for anything that's created a loss. Mr B has explained that the upset the delay caused was mainly due to the loss in exchange rate he could see materialising at the time and the worry of not receiving his money. Barclays have recalculated the transfers based on the exchange rate at the point it deems the earliest the transfer would've been made. I've checked this information and I'm satisfied the date and rate they've used is fair. Mr B has also agreed he is happy with this amount. Barclays also paid the difference in pounds rather than sterling, so Mr B got slightly more than planned.

So, I'm satisfied Mr B is back in the same position he would've been had the delay and error not occurred. And I'm satisfied the compensation amount takes into account the trouble and upset the delays caused and fairly compensates Mr B for this.

I've also noted Mr B's complaint that he's unhappy with the tone of the letter sent on 11 July 2022. Having seen the letter, I'm satisfied that it's factual and apologises for the fact Mr B needs to close his account. So, I haven't found any issue with the way it's been worded.

### **Putting things right**

Barclays Bank PLC should pay Mr B an additional £100 taking the total compensation amount to £300.

This is in addition to the £30 also already paid for the telephone call costs.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that I uphold Mr B's complaint against Barclays Bank PLC and instruct it to pay an additional £100.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr B to accept or reject my decision before 7 August 2023.

Tom Wagstaff

**Ombudsman**