

The complaint

Mrs S complains that Barclays Bank UK PLC closed her savings account in error.

What happened

Mrs S has explained that in July 2022 she completed forms sent to her by Barclays and gave an updated UK address. Mrs S had previously resided abroad which was the address Barclays had on file for her. Barclays has advised it didn't receive anything from Mrs S updating her address in July 2022.

Barclays says it continued to write to Mrs S at the address it had on file for her to request information about her residency and tax status. Ultimately, Barclays says it took the decision to close Mrs S' savings account when no response to its letters was received.

Mrs S says that on 25 February 2023 she found a letter from Barclays on her online banking facility dated 8 January 2023 advising it intended to close her account. Barclays has confirmed the account was closed on 2 February 2023 after no contact from Mrs S was received.

Mrs S went on to raise a complaint. Barclays amended Mrs S' address to her residence in the UK and paid her £50 for the distress and inconvenience caused. Mrs S has told us she was advised that Barclays would be in touch to make arrangements to reopen her account, but no follow up contact was received.

Mrs S contacted Barclays again in March 2023 and said her complaint had been closed in error. Mrs S asked Barclays to reopen the account without delay. Around the same time, the Financial Ombudsman Service asked Barclays to provide a copy of its complaint file. In its submission to us, Barclays confirmed it had taken steps to reopen Mrs S' savings account and that her funds had been paid back into it. Barclays confirmed the interest that would've accrued was added to the account. Barclays advised it wanted to offer Mrs S a further £50, taking the total award to £100, to resolve her complaint.

Our investigator thought Barclays had dealt with Mrs S' complaint fairly and resolved the issues raised. Mrs S asked to appeal and said she wasn't satisfied that Barclays had explained why her account was closed and that the £100 settlement didn't reflect the time taken or inconvenience caused. As Mrs S asked to appeal, her 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'm aware I've summarised the events surrounding this complaint in less detail than the parties involved. No discourtesy is intended by my approach which reflects the informal nature of this service. I want to assure all parties I've read and considered everything on file. I'm satisfied I don't need to comment on every point raised to fairly reach my decision. And if

I don't comment on something, it's not because I haven't considered it. It's because I've focused on what I think are the key issues. My approach is in line with the rules we operate under.

I can understand why Mrs S is upset that her savings account closed without receiving notice. And I understand Mrs S completed forms Barclays sent her in July 2022 and returned them so expected her address in the UK to be recorded. But I have to be fair to both sides, and Barclays has confirmed it didn't receive anything from Mrs S in July 2022 with her new address. So whilst I understand Mrs S complied with Barclays' request for a form to be completed, I'm satisfied Barclays didn't receive it. I think Barclays would have evidence if it had received Mrs S' form or a request to amend her address last year. But no record of that nature exists. I'm sorry to disappoint Mrs S but I haven't found evidence that shows Barclays made a mistake as it didn't receive details of her new address.

Barclays continued to write to Mrs S at her last known address. I understand a letter dated 8 January 2023 was made available online, but I think the failure to receive its other letters reflects the address Barclays was writing to. And, as I've said above, Barclays has confirmed it didn't receive details of Mrs S' new address in July 2022. It was only when Mrs S complained in February 2023 that her address was amended.

Barclays says it should've taken steps to reopen Mrs S' savings account but didn't due to a systems error. I can understand why Mrs S is frustrated that Barclays failed to act on its promise to reopen her account in good time. I'm pleased Barclays has since confirmed the account is open again and interest Mrs S' savings would've accrued has been paid. I'm satisfied that puts Mrs S' account back into the right position.

I've considered whether Barclays offer of a further £50 for the delays in reopening Mrs S' account (taking the total award to £100) is fair. In response to the investigator, Mrs S explained she'd spent around 100 minutes calling Barclays at a cost of around £12. Mrs S says her time cost £75 for the period she was dealing with Barclays and her complaint. I take Mrs S' point and accept she did spend a reasonable period of time dealing with the issues raised. But, overall, I'm satisfied that compensation of £100 taking Mrs S' call costs as well as the overall distress and inconvenience caused to her is a fair and reasonable way to resolve her complaint. To put it another way, the settlement is very much in line with what I would've told Barclays to pay, had no offer been made. I'm sorry to disappoint Mrs S but I haven't found grounds to tell Barclays to increase the settlement further.

As I'm satisfied Barclays has explained what happened, reopened Mrs S' account and agreed a fair settlement I'm not telling it to do anything else.

My final decision

My decision is that Barclays Bank UK Plc has already agreed a settlement that is fair and reasonable in all the circumstances.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs S to accept or reject my decision before 31 October 2023.

Marco Manente
Ombudsman