

## **The complaint**

Mr M complains about how National Savings and Investments (NS&I) dealt with a transfer request.

## **What happened**

Mr M says he asked NS&I to transfer money from his account and asked it to close his account. He says the process was delayed and that NS&I required forms to be sent to him and returned via the postal service. Mr M questions that requirement as he lived abroad and experienced problems with the post. He would like significant compensation for what took place.

NS&I accepts it could have offered an indemnity option earlier than it did and accepts it paid the money in circumstances where it said it couldn't do so. It's offered £50 compensation and says it followed the account agreement conditions by requesting written instructions.

Mr M brought his complaint to us, and our investigator upheld the complaint and recommended NS&I increase its compensation offer to £100. The investigator thought NS&I had followed its agreement conditions but accepted it then paid the money without the form.

Mr M doesn't accept that view and questions if there was a contractual agreement.

## **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 have come to the overall view that I uphold this complaint but also agree with the investigator's compensation recommendation. I appreciate Mr M will be disappointed by my decision and appreciate how strongly he feels about what took place.

I hope it will assist Mr M if I explain our role here. We are not NS&I's regulator and so it's not our role to direct it about for example the way in which it accepts instructions or about its requirements for written instructions. I say that as I appreciate that Mr M may have difficulties receiving postal mail and questions NS&I's requirements.

I'm satisfied that Mr M would have agreed to the account terms and conditions when the account was first opened and agreed to their amendments over time. Those terms and conditions say that the account can be managed by post only. So, I don't think NS&I initially acted unfairly by requiring Mr M to send it written instructions or by sending him the form. I can't fairly hold NS&I responsible for any delays or problems with the mail.

There is no dispute here that NS&I didn't offer Mr M the alternative of providing it with an indemnity. I accept that caused some delay and am sure Mr M was caused frustration due to that mistake. I can see that NS&I fairly accepts that mistake and has offered what I think is a fair and reasonable compensation offer of £50 for that mistake.

I can see that NS&I then paid the money to Mr M's nominated account despite not receiving

the required form. I again appreciate Mr M's frustration in those circumstances. The investigator has recommended NS&I pay a further £50 compensation which I think is fair and reasonable. I don't think that specific mistake resulted in any financial loss or justifies more than that amount. I don't think it clear why Mr M appears to be reluctant to confirm receipt of the money and I think it likely the money has now been paid.

Overall, I accept there have been mistakes here but those mistakes do not justify the level of compensation Mr M would like. I make clear to Mr M I have listened to all of the available telephone calls and as I have already made clear, I appreciate his frustration with the process he was asked to follow. I find this now brings and end to what we in trying to resolve this dispute can do.

### **Putting things right**

I intend to order NS&I to pay Mr M £100 compensation. His acceptance of that award would be in full and final settlement of this complaint.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that I uphold this complaint in part and order National Savings and Investments to pay Mr M £100 compensation.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr M to accept or reject my decision before 12 October 2023.

David Singh  
**Ombudsman**