

## **The complaint**

Mr H complains that Barclays Bank UK PLC closed his accounts without notice.

## **What happened**

Mr H had an account with Barclays. In February 2023, Barclays wrote to Mr H to say that it had decided to immediately close his account. Mr H says the first he knew about this was when he received an alert in his app advising that funds had been withdrawn from his accounts. He says he only learned the accounts had been closed the next day, when he attended a branch. He says this caused him distress. He was then unable to withdraw any funds from the account for a further three days. He says he's been made to feel like a criminal.

Barclays looked into all this and thought it had acted correctly. It said it was correct to close Mr H's account, and that the reason Mr H wasn't able to withdraw the funds immediately was because it needed to carry out further checks.

Our investigator looked at this. She didn't think Barclays had demonstrated that it had acted fairly in closing the accounts immediately. So she recommended Barclays pay Mr H £100 for the trouble and upset this caused.

Mr H didn't agree. The complaint has been passed to me to decide.

## **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.

Barclays, like all financial businesses, is subject to legal and regulatory requirements that mean it may need to review a customer's account at any time. Based on what I've seen I'm satisfied that Barclays was acting in accordance with these requirements when it reviewed Mr H's account.

The terms and conditions that applied to Mr H's account said that Barclays could close an account by giving him at least two months' notice. In some cases, Barclays could close the account immediately. In this case, Barclays closed the account immediately.

Where a business closes accounts in these circumstances it doesn't need to give reasons – and nor would it be appropriate for me to tell Barclays to share its reasons with Mr H, much as Mr H might like to know.

Barclays has, nevertheless, provided some information with us in confidence about the closure of Mr H's account. It wouldn't be appropriate for me to share this with Mr H, but having considered this carefully I think its decision to close the account was reasonable. I further note that Barclays did try to contact Mr H by phone to ask him about his account – but Mr H appears to have not responded to the call because he assumed it was routine. Based on what I've seen, I'm satisfied that Barclays was able to close the account.

That said, our investigator asked Barclays for further information about why it closed the account immediately. Barclays didn't respond to this at the time – and has subsequently agreed to the investigator's recommendation that it pay £100. With this in mind, while I accept Barclays could close the account, I'm not sufficiently persuaded it could do so immediately.

I've therefore gone on to consider what Barclays needs to do to put things right. If Barclays had given Mr H notice, he wouldn't have lost access to the funds. I accept that it was distressing for Mr H to learn his account had been closed.

I'm satisfied Barclays could still have closed the account if it had given Mr H the correct notice – and so Mr H would always have experienced some of the inconvenience of having to rearrange his banking. It also appears Mr H had access to another account he could use – and Barclays was able to return Mr H's funds to him within three days..

Where I award compensation for distress, inconvenience, pain or suffering this isn't to punish the business but to reflect the impact of the bank's actions. I acknowledge the stress this must have caused Mr H. But for the reasons above, I'm not persuaded Barclays's actions had more than a modest impact on Mr H. With this in mind, I think the £100 recommended by the investigator is fair. And so that's what I'm going to tell Barclays to pay Mr H.

I note Mr H's further comments. He says this has happened to a lot of people recently, and wants Barclays to update its procedures and understand the impact its actions have on loyal customers. In this decision, I can only consider Mr H's individual complaint. Barclays's procedures and how it treats consumers more generally is a matter for the regulator. So this doesn't change my conclusion.

### **My final decision**

I uphold the complaint. Barclays Bank UK PLC should pay Mr H £100 to reflect the trouble and upset it caused.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr H to accept or reject my decision before 6 March 2024.

Rebecca Hardman  
**Ombudsman**