

The complaint

Mr M and Ms W complain that Monzo Bank Ltd wouldn't let them open a joint account. They'd like Monzo Bank Ltd to explain why and open a joint account for them.

What happened

Mr M and Ms W both have sole accounts with Monzo.

In May 2023, after being encouraged via Monzo's website Mr M and Ms W tried to apply for a joint account. But, on attempting to make the application Monzo advised it had been declined and they couldn't offer them a joint account right now.

Ms W complained to Monzo – but Monzo explained they'd followed the correct internal procedures and couldn't let Mr M and Ms W apply for a joint account at that time.

Ms W wasn't happy with their response so brought their complaint to our service. She added there's no mention that they could be rejected, they have good credit scores and it'll take a longer process to open a joint account with another bank.

One of our Investigators looked into Mr M and Ms W's complaint. They asked Monzo questions about why the application was declined, but Monzo didn't supply any supporting information. Our Investigator concluded that Monzo didn't act fairly in declining Mr M and Ms W's application – so recommended they pay £100 for the distress caused.

Mr M and Ms W didn't reply.

Monzo didn't accept our Investigator's outcome. They responded providing further information sharing why they weren't able to offer Mr M and Ms W an account at the time.

On reviewing the additional evidence Monzo supplied, I reached a different conclusion to our Investigator. I contacted both parties and explained my initial thoughts. I advised Mr M and Ms W that Monzo had shared information with our service in confidence advising why they couldn't open a joint account for them – and having reviewed this I couldn't say their actions were unfair. I asked for Mr M and Ms W to reply by 18 July 2024.

Neither party responded to my thoughts, so I've proceeded to issue my 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've considered Monzo's actions and their reasons for declining Mr M and Ms W's application. Monzo have a responsibility to comply with numerous legal and regulatory obligations when offering accounts. They've submitted some evidence to our service in confidence. Our rules permit this and it's then for me to decide whether it's fair to rely on evidence that only one party has seen. The information I've seen is sensitive and on balance I don't believe it should be disclosed. But it's also clearly material to whether or not Monzo

treated Mr M and Ms W fairly - so I'll need to take it into account when deciding the outcome of their complaint.

It's not our services role to question a business's eligibility criteria for accounts or other products - but we do have the power to assess whether they've declined an application fairly and not discriminated against their consumer. I appreciate that Mr M and Ms W experienced distress in Monzo declining to open a joint account for them. But having reviewed all of the evidence, I'm satisfied Monzo acted fairly in declining their application. I understand they'd like to know why this is, but I'm afraid for the reasons I've outlined above I won't be able to share anything further about this.

I'd like to reassure Mr M and Ms W that Monzo haven't advised our service that they'll be ineligible to reapply for a joint account at a later time.

For the reasons I've outlined above I won't be asking Monzo to do anything further here.

My final decision

My final decision is I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr M and Ms W to accept or reject my decision before 25 July 2024.

Jeff Burch
Ombudsman