

## **The complaint**

Mrs and Mr M have complained that Nationwide Building Society delayed crediting their bank transfer to their 1 Year Bond, which has resulted in them suffering a financial loss.

## **What happened**

On Friday 25 November 2022 Mrs and Mr M transferred £4.2 million from their bank to Nationwide Building Society (Nationwide). The transfer was made by CHAPS.

Nationwide received the transferred monies on 25 November 2022 at 4.21pm. Nationwide has said that because the transferred monies was more than £1m then the transfer couldn't be released until it was approved by their Account Review Team.

Mrs and Mr M's transfer was referred to Nationwide's Account Review Team at 4.30pm on 25 November 2022. Nationwide has said that their Account Review Team has a timescale of two hours to review a payment and then either accept or reject it.

Nationwide has said that the working hours of their Account Review Team are 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, and that as a result Mrs and Mr M's bank transfer couldn't be approved before the team's close of business on Friday 25 November 2022. This meant that Mrs and Mr M's bank transfer was held in a suspense account over the weekend, until the Account Review Team's next working day.

Because the Account Review Team's working hours are 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday, the Team's next working day was Monday 28 November 2022. Nationwide's Account Review Team completed their review of Mrs and Mr M's bank transfer on their next working day.

The Account Review Team approved Mrs and Mr M's bank transfer of £4.2 million at 9.54am on Monday 28 November 2022 and these monies were then credited to Mrs and Mr M's Nationwide 1 Year Bond.

Mrs and Mr M complained to Nationwide. They said that because Nationwide received their bank transfer on 25 November 2022, but then didn't credit the bank transfer to their 1 Year Bond until 28 November 2022, they lost out on interest over this period. Mrs and Mr M have said that the lost interest is £1,380.82 and Nationwide should compensate them for this.

Nationwide responded to Mrs and Mr M's complaint on 23 December 2022. Nationwide said that as their Account Review Team had reviewed and released Mrs and Mr M's bank transfer within two working hours, then the transfer had been credited to their 1 Year Bond

within the timescale that they would expect. Nationwide didn't uphold Mrs and Mr M's complaint.

Mrs and Mr M were unhappy with Nationwide's response, so they referred their complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service. One of our Investigators reviewed Mrs and Mr M's complaint.

The Investigator's view was that Nationwide hadn't done anything wrong so didn't uphold Mrs and Mr M's complaint. In response to the Investigator's view Mrs and Mr M said that as Nationwide advertise a "24/7" service, then their bank transfer shouldn't have been held in a suspense account over the weekend but should instead have been credited to their 1 Year Bond on the same day that the bank transfer was made, regardless of the time of day, or day of the week, that the transfer was made.

Mrs and Mr M therefore asked for their complaint to be brought to an Ombudsman.

### **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.

Mrs and Mr M have said that the CHAPS transfer for £4.2 million was made by their bank to Nationwide shortly after 3.30pm on Friday 25 November 2022.

As I've said above, Nationwide has said that this bank transfer was received by them at 4.21pm on the same day, and at 4.30pm that day Mrs and Mr M's bank transfer was referred to Nationwide's Account Review Team for approval or rejection.

This meant that Nationwide referred Mrs and Mr M's bank transfer to their Account Review Team nine minutes after its receipt. I think that this is reasonable, and I've seen no evidence to suggest that Nationwide delayed seeking approval for the transfer from their Accounts Review Team.

Mrs and Mr M have also said that Nationwide messaged them later that afternoon to confirm that the bank transfer had been received, as Mrs and Mr M had asked them to do.

Mrs and Mr M have said that Nationwide should also have told them that their bank transfer wouldn't be credited to their Bond the same day and that if they'd know this then they would have asked Nationwide to send the transfer back to their bank.

But I've seen no evidence to show that when their bank sent the bank transfer at just after 3.30pm on Friday 25 November 2022, Mrs and Mr M asked Nationwide to confirm if their transfer would still be credited to their 1 Year Bond on the same day. Instead, I think that they just asked Nationwide to confirm that they had received the bank transfer, which I think they did.

I therefore think it reasonable that once Nationwide received the bank transfer, they continued to process the transfer in their normal way, as they had no instructions to do otherwise.

Nationwide has said that because Mrs and Mr M's bank transfer was more than £1 million then it had to be referred to their Accounts Review Team before it could be credited to Mr and Mrs M's Bond. This was so that additional financial crime and anti-money laundering checks could be carried out on the bank transfer. I think it reasonable that Nationwide needed to complete such checks before they could credit the transfer to Mrs and Mr M's

Bond.

As I've also said above, Nationwide has said that the working hours of their Accounts Review Team was 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. I think that this meant that as Mrs and Mr M's bank transfer wasn't received by this team until 4.30pm on Friday 25 November, then the team had 30 minutes to approve or reject the bank transfer before their close of business that day.

Nationwide has said that their Accounts Review Team is given two hours to complete all their financial crime and anti-money laundering checks to then approve or reject a bank transfer. I therefore don't think it unreasonable that the Accounts Review Team didn't complete their checks within the 30 minutes that was available to them before their close of business on 25 November 2022.

This meant that the Accounts Review Team next worked on Mrs and Mr M's bank transfer on Monday 28 November 2022. The team's working hours started at 9am that day and Mrs and Mr M's bank transfer was approved at 9.54am that day. I think that this meant that the Accounts Review Team had approved Mrs and Mr M's bank transfer in 1 hour and 24 minutes of their working hours, so this was within the 2 hours turnaround time set for them by Nationwide. I think that this was reasonable.

I think that as Nationwide's Accounts Review Team was able to complete their review of Mrs and Mr M's bank transfer within 1 hour and 24 minutes of their working hours, and they had been sent the transfer to review nine minutes after it had been received by Nationwide, then Nationwide were able to credit the bank transfer to Mr and Mrs M's Bond 1 hour and 33 minutes of their working hours after its receipt.

I therefore think it reasonable to assume that had Mrs and Mr M's bank transfer been sent to Nationwide earlier in the day than it was on Friday 25 November 2022, then their bank transfer would've been credited to their 1 Year bond the same day. I don't think that Nationwide can be held responsible for them not receiving the bank transfer until 4.21pm on Friday 25 November 2022.

Mrs and Mr M have said that Nationwide advertise a "24/7" banking service and therefore Nationwide should have credited their bank transfer to their Bond on 25 November 2022, regardless of what time on that day Nationwide received their bank transfer, or what day of the week the transfer was made.

But Nationwide has said that the working hours of their Account Review Team was 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and that this team needed to approve or reject Mrs and Mr M's bank transfer because it was more than £1 million. I think that it's reasonable to assume that not every Nationwide team will work 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

As I've said above, Nationwide's Account Review Team had only 30 minutes of their working day remaining to accept or reject Mrs and Mr M's bank transfer on 25 November 2022, if the transfer was to be credited to Mrs and Mr M's Bond on the same day. I think that it wasn't unreasonable that the Account Review Team wasn't able to complete all their checks within this time period.

As Mrs and Mr M's bank made their transfer just after 3.30pm on Friday 25 November 2022, and as the bank transfer was more than £1 million, then Nationwide was only able to fully complete their financial crime and anti-money laundering checks on the morning of Monday 28 November 2022, which they did by 9.54am that day. Again, I don't think that this was unreasonable.

I therefore don't think that Nationwide has done anything wrong, and I am not upholding Mrs and Mr M's complaint.

**My final decision**

My final decision is that I don't uphold Mrs and Mr M's complaint against Nationwide Building Society.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs M and Mr M to accept or reject my decision before 16 April 2024.

Ian Barton  
**Ombudsman**