

The complaint

Mr M complains about the way that National Savings and Investments (NS&I) handled the purchase of a premium bond.

What happened

In mid-September 2023, Mrs S bought her grandson, Mr M a premium bond. Mrs S was told by NS&I that she would receive confirmation of the investment and that Mr M's parent would receive a welcome pack.

Mr M's parent had not received the welcome pack by the end of September 2023 and Mrs S had not heard anything from NS&I either.

Mrs S found NS&I unhelpful when she contacted them by phone. NS&I later told Mrs S that it could not deal with her as Mr M was the legal owner of the premium bond.

Mrs S says she continued to try and speak with NS&I several times leading to high phone bills and wasted time.

NS&I didn't uphold the complaint saying that it sent Mrs S confirmation of the purchase by letter on 19 September 2023.

Our investigator didn't uphold Mr M's complaint. She was satisfied that NS&I sent Mr M's parent a request for proof of Mr M's identity on 20 September 2023. After approving the transaction, NS&I sent Mr M confirmation of the bond purchase on 9 October 2023. So, our investigator didn't think there had been any undue delay on the part of NS&I.

Our investigator explained to Mrs S that Mr M was the eligible complainant as he is the holder of the bond. This means that although Mrs S was unhappy with the delay issuing the bond and the time she spent following up with NS&I, our investigator could only look at the impact on Mr M.

Mrs S remains unhappy with the investigation outcome. She says she had to contact NS&I several times. Mrs S wants NS&I to pay compensation for the stress caused and the cost of the calls.

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.

While I can see that Mrs S says she didn't receive confirmation of the purchase and spent time contacting NS&I, she is not an eligible complainant under the rules that govern our service. The eligible complainant is the holder of the premium bond - Mr M. I understand Mrs S will find it disappointing but I am not able to direct any payment to her as this is a complaint made on Mr M's behalf. And I can only make an award to the individual who has complained.

When NS&I is asked to issue premium bonds to someone else's child, it first has to carry out identity checks. NS&I has provided evidence that it wrote to Mr M's parent on 20 September 2023 to request proof of Mr M's identity. After receiving the relevant information, NS&I sent confirmation of the investment to Mr M's parent on 9 October 2023. As I'm satisfied that NS&I didn't delay issuing the premium bond to Mr M and I don't think it treated him unfairly, I don't find any reason to uphold this complaint.

My final decision

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

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

Gemma Bowen
Ombudsman