

## **The complaint**

Mr B and Ms W complain that Monzo Bank Ltd declined their application for a joint account. They'd like compensation for the impact caused.

## **What happened**

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

In May 2023, after being encouraged via Monzo's website Mr B 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 reviewed their internal eligibility criteria and unfortunately they could offer Mr B and Ms W an account at the moment.

Ms W wasn't happy with their response so brought their complaint to our service. She added that her and Mr B spent time discussing combining their finances and this wouldn't have been necessary if Monzo hadn't encouraged them to apply.

One of our Investigators looked into Mr B 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 B and Ms W's application – so recommended Monzo pay £100 for the distress caused.

Ms W, on behalf of Mr B and Ms W, accepted the recommendation.

But Monzo didn't. Monzo responded providing further information sharing why they weren't able to offer Mr B and Ms W an account at the time.

As Monzo didn't agree the case was passed to me to decide.

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

Mr B responded saying the biggest issue him and Ms W experience is not knowing why it was declined and it's very inconvenient that they can't share a bank account.

Monzo didn't respond.

As Mr B and Ms W didn't agree I've proceeded to reconsider my findings and 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 B 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 B 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 B 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 B 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 B and Ms W to accept or reject my decision before 25 July 2024.

Jeff Burch  
**Ombudsman**