

## **The complaint**

Ms H says she closed her account with Monzo Bank Ltd (“Monzo”) in September 2023. But Ms H says that she discovered an account was opened in her name April 2024, without her consent or knowledge.

## **What happened**

On 21 May 2024, Ms H contacted Monzo as she noticed that it was still reporting her having a current account open with it, despite her closing her account in September 2023.

As a result of this Ms H submitted a complaint to Monzo. Whilst waiting for Monzo to look into matters, Ms H contacted Monzo a number of times and asked for a manager to call her back, but it took some time before this happened.

As Monzo had not issued a final response letter to the complaint within the stipulated 8-week period, Ms H referred her complaint to this service.

After Ms H referred her complaint to this service, Monzo said it didn’t think it was at fault for reporting that Ms H held a current account with it, as it said that Ms H had applied to open an account in April 2024. It did though agree that it had not handled matters well, specifically that Ms H had asked for a manager to call her back a number of times, and it took an unreasonable amount of time before this happened. Because of this Monzo said it was willing to pay Ms H £125 compensation for the poor service levels she received.

As Ms H didn’t accept the offer, the investigator assessed the complaint, and they concluded what Monzo had offered was fair.

As Ms H didn’t agree with the investigator’s assessment, the matter was referred for an ombudsman’s 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.

Having reviewed everything, I agree with the investigator’s conclusions for broadly the same reasons. I will explain why.

In summary, Ms H says that she didn’t apply for a Monzo account in April 2024. Ms H concludes that it must therefore have been fraudulently opened by a third party. Conversely, Monzo says that Ms H submitted a video of herself saying she wanted to open an account and also provided a photo of her driving licence to apply for the account in May 2023. That account was then subsequently closed in September 2023. Monzo says that Ms H applied to open an account again in April 2024. It says that Ms H provided another video of herself saying she wanted to open an account, and another photo of her driving licence, and once it had received that information, it opened the account for Ms H.

Having reviewed all of the available evidence, I’m satisfied that Ms H did in all likelihood apply to open an account in April 2024. I say this because I have seen the two videos. And it is clearly the same person in both videos. Therefore, whilst I don’t know what Ms H looks like, I am satisfied that the person appearing in the second video is the same person who appears in the first video. And I’m satisfied that Ms H was required to submit the first video

when she initially opened her account with Monzo in May 2023, as part of Monzo's account opening process. Therefore, I'm satisfied that Ms H is in the video that was submitted in the application to open the account in April 2024.

In addition to the videos, the photo of the driving licence sent in April 2024 also appears to match the details of the photo of her driving licence that was submitted by Ms H in May 2023.

Given that Ms H insists that she didn't apply for the account in April 2024, I did consider the possibility that the photo and video she'd submitted in May 2023 had been obtained and used again by a third party, so as to open an account in Ms H's name without her knowing. However, that is not the case here, as the video and photo submitted in May 2023 are clearly different to the ones submitted in April 2024.

I have also considered the possibility that Ms H had submitted the video for some other reason, and it had been used to open an account for her in error. But again, that doesn't seem to be the case either, because in the video Ms H says: "*My name is [first name and surname given] and I want a Monzo account*". So it's clear that the video was submitted for the purposes of opening another account – as her previous account had already been closed for a number of months by April 2024.

When responding to the investigator, Ms H has said that the account application in April 2024 must have been fraudulent as she says it is impossible for her to have submitted the video and the photo of her driving licence because she is blind. I recognise that, given Ms H's circumstances, it may be very difficult for her to know if something is in frame when taking a photo or video. But, at the same time, I can't reasonably say that it is *impossible* for Ms H to have taken the photo and the video of herself in question.

Ms H has also said that the account application in April 2024 was fraudulent because she'd only recently closed her existing account in September 2023. She says that Monzo should've questioned her why she was applying for another account so soon after she'd closed a previous one. But I don't agree with Ms H on these points. People are free to change their minds and I see no reason why Monzo ought to have questioned Ms H's motivation or apparent change of heart in applying to open another account with it. As long as it had taken reasonable steps to verify Ms H's identity during the account application process – which I think it did - then I can't say that it has done anything unreasonable or unfair, or is at fault, in processing the account application that it had received in April 2024.

I appreciate that Ms H is adamant that the account application in April 2024 was not done by her and that she says it's fraudulent. I note that Ms H says she has contacted the police and Action Fraud about this matter. But when weighing up all of the evidence that this service has been provided with, it is the case that the available evidence does indicate to me that Ms H in all likelihood did apply to open another account with Monzo in April 2024. Therefore, I can't say that Monzo had done anything wrong when it reported the application of the new account in Ms H's name, to the credit reference agencies.

Finally, I note that Ms H also complained about Monzo's handling of matters. In particular, that she asked for a manager to call her back a number of times and this did not happen until a number of weeks later. Overall, I think Monzo's offer to pay Ms H £125 compensation for the distress and inconvenience caused in not calling her back is fair and reasonable in the circumstances.

### **Putting things right**

To put things right, I require Monzo to pay Ms H £125 compensation for the distress and inconvenience caused by this matter.

**My final decision**

Because of the reasons given above, I uphold this complaint and require Monzo Bank Ltd to do what I have outlined above to put matters right, in full and final settlement of this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Ms H to accept or reject my decision before 31 October 2024.

Thomas White  
**Ombudsman**