

## **The complaint**

Miss S is unhappy that National Savings and Investments (“NS&I”) haven’t provided her with a written confirmation that her account with them is closed.

## **What happened**

Miss S instructed NS&I to cash in a premium bond that she held and to close her account with NS&I. Miss S was asked to complete an online form by NS&I, which she did, and she received a payment from NS&I shortly thereafter.

However, Miss S didn’t receive any written confirmation from NS&I that her account with them had been closed. And over the next several months Miss S tried on multiple occasions to obtain an account closure letter from NS&I but without success. Miss S wasn’t happy about this, so she raised a complaint.

NS&I responded to Miss S but answered a complaint point about the amount of paperwork Miss S needed to complete to close her account that hadn’t been raised by Miss S. Instead, Miss S’s complaint was that NS&I had failed to send her a letter confirming that her NS&I account was now closed.

In their complaint response letter, NS&I said that they needed to be able to verify Miss S’s signature in order to comply with her request to send a confirmation of account closure to her. However, NS&I did accept that this hadn’t been adequately explained to Miss S by any of their agents and they paid £75 to Miss S as compensation for any trouble or upset this may have caused. Miss S wasn’t satisfied with NS&I’s response, so she referred her complaint to this service.

One of our investigators looked at this complaint. They felt that NS&I had provided a poor standard of service to Miss S and said that they should provide an account closure letter to her and pay Miss S a further £75 compensation for the trouble and upset she’d incurred. Neither Miss nor NS&I were satisfied with our investigators recommendation, so the matter was escalated to an ombudsman for a final 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 done so, I feel that it’s clear and apparent, by any reasonable standard, that Miss S has received a poor standard of service from NS&I here. Ultimately, all Miss S wants is a letter from NS&I confirming that her NS&I account has been closed. And it’s somewhat bewildering to me that NS&I have thus far been unable to provide this letter to Miss S.

NS&I have said that to provide such a letter, they require a verified copy of Miss S’s signature. This doesn’t seem reasonable to me, especially given that NS&I have paid Miss S the full balance of her account without imposing such a requirement on her.

I can therefore completely understand Miss S's frustration at the repeated instances of poor service and failures to understand her request that NS&I have demonstrated. And I don't feel that the £75 compensation that NS&I have already paid to Miss S fairly accounts for the troubling experience that Miss S has had to endure over what is a very simple request.

Matters of compensation can be subjective, and I'm aware that Miss S was unhappy with the recommendation put forward by our investigator that NS&I should pay a further £75 compensation to her, taking the total compensation amount to £150. But upon consideration, I feel that a total compensation amount of £150 is a fair amount here.

In taking this position, I've considered the impact of what has happened on Miss S alongside the general framework that this service uses when assessing compensation amounts, details of which are on this service's website.

All of which means that I'll be upholding this complaint in Miss S's favour and instructing NS&I to send Miss S a formal letter confirming the closure of her NS&I account. And I'm also instructing NS&I to pay a further £75 to Miss S, taking the total compensation amount payable to her to £150.

### **Putting things right**

NS&I must send a formal letter to Miss S confirming the closure of her NS&I account.

NS&I must also pay a further £75 to Miss S, in addition to the £75 that they've already paid.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that I uphold this complaint against National Savings and Investments on the basis explained above.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss S to accept or reject my decision before 29 November 2024.

Paul Cooper  
**Ombudsman**