

## **The complaint**

Mr K is unhappy with Nationwide Building Society. Mr K said Nationwide's fraud team contacted him about a transaction on his account. It said the transaction amount (£480) would be returned to him. But the amount did then leave his account and Mr K wants Nationwide to repay him.

## **What happened**

Mr K was given the impression by Nationwide that the money hadn't left his account. So, he was told that the money would be stopped and given back to him. But a day later Mr K said the same member of staff, who had confirmed he would be keeping the money, contacted him to say the payment had gone out of his account. Nationwide confirmed that it wouldn't be able to refund the money to Mr K.

Mr K complained and Nationwide accepted it had provided incorrect information to Mr K. It offered Mr K £100 compensation in view of the mistake made. Mr K didn't accept this and brought his complaint to this service.

Our investigator didn't uphold the complaint. She accepted Nationwide had provided wrong details to Mr K and noted it had apologised. But she agreed with Nationwide's position that it correctly released the payment to the third party. Our investigator said the £100 compensation offer was at the level she would have awarded. She said Nationwide had acted fairly and reasonably.

Mr K remained unhappy with this and asked for his complaint to be passed 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.

Mr K was expecting to get the £480 back. He said he was only expecting this because Nationwide told him confidently this was going to happen. So, he was disappointed when the next day he was told that Nationwide had made an error and the money had been released to the third party. Nationwide said Mr K would need to speak to the third party about getting the money back. It said that it wouldn't be able to refund Mr K.

In its final response letter Nationwide apologised, accepted an error had been made in the information it provided to Mr K and it paid £100 to say sorry for this.

Mr K was using a group on social media to make various betting transactions via bank transfer. The £480 transaction was queried by Nationwide. It rang Mr K to discuss the payment and said it was potentially a fraud case, so it logged a claim for Mr K. The staff member also said the payment had been blocked, so it would not go through. This was incorrect.

The payment did go through – as it wasn't fraudulent. Nationwide asked its payment monitoring team to review it. It said it was a faster payment done through online banking to another individual third party. Nationwide said instead this was a civil dispute matter. It said Mr K would need to contact the third party recipient of the payment if he wanted to get the money back. Nationwide said, *"This is because these payments were made for gambling purposes and so we are unable to ascertain if this is a scam or if simply the bet has been lost."* Nationwide said based on the information available to it Mr K could be trying to recover a gambling loss.

Nationwide carried out additional checks on the £480 payment. But having completed the checks there was no fraud issue with the payment. Nationwide released the money to the third party. Nationwide said in regard to allowing the payment to go through there was no error. I've no evidence to suggest otherwise. Mr K didn't produce any details to show any other issues. So, I think Nationwide acted reasonably when it released the payment after checking it.

But I can understand why Mr K was upset with this. Nationwide had said to Mr K the payment would be stopped and he would get the money back. Mr K was expecting to get the full amount, so he wasn't happy Nationwide only paid him £100 as compensation instead. But it has apologised, paid the compensation for the mistake, and explained why it wasn't able to stop the payment. I think that's fair and reasonable as the payment wasn't fraudulent.

It also discussed Mr K's gambling transactions and offered its Special Support Team if Mr K needed assistance with adding some blocks on certain gambling websites.

### **My final decision**

I don't uphold this complaint.

I make no further award against Nationwide Building Society.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr K to accept or reject my decision before 19 November 2024.

John Quinlan  
**Ombudsman**