

The complaint

W, a limited company, complains that Barclays Bank UK PLC didn't confirm that it had closed its account as it had requested happen several times.

What happened

W explains that it wanted to close its account and wasn't able to do so online or by telephone. It wrote to Barclays on 2 April 2024 and having not had a response sent an email on 8 April 2024 and then wrote again on 11 April 2024. W says it had no confirmation that the account was closed. The director wasn't able to answer a call from Barclays on 12 April 2024 or log in that afternoon but sent a text to Barclays. He noticed that the net balance in the account of £12.24 had been received in W's new account at a different financial business. The complaint is that Barclays didn't respond to the letters and email and that it has also been difficult for this complaint to be dealt with before it was referred to this service. W said it wanted £150 in compensation.

Barclays has since issued a final response to the complaint. It said that it recognised that it failed to respond to the messages and confirm that the account was closed, and it apologised. It said that the account was closed when W's letter of 2 April 2024 was dealt with. Barclays said it had tried to contact W on 12 April 2024 to confirm the name on the new bank account. The text from the director had been sent to a number that wasn't monitored. It recognised that had it written to confirm the closure then W may not have needed to contact this service. But it said that it wouldn't be awarding compensation as there had been no financial loss and the account had been closed and the money sent to W within ten days.

Our investigator recommended that Barclays pay W £50 in compensation. She took into account how long it might take for the letters to reach Barclays and be processed. And that it seemed that Barclays wouldn't have been able to respond to the letter of 2 April 2024 before W had contacted it further. She didn't think that Barclays could have left a message when it called the director for security reasons. And it didn't accept a text message to that number in response. She noted that Barclays had sent a closing statement of the account, but the director says he only realised the account was closed when he received a statement from the new bank in May 2024. As Barclays could have sent W a separate letter she thought a small monetary payment of £50 was reasonable.

W didn't agree but said it would accept £100 taking into account our published guidelines about compensation.

Barclays said it still didn't agree to pay any compensation. It had acted on the instructions of W, and this was the letter of 2 April 2024. It couldn't have accepted email instructions to close the account but ought to have confirmed receipt of the email of 8 April 2024. But it said that this was a minor administrative error which didn't require compensation. Barclays clarified that it would as part of its process only issue a closure letter where it sent a cheque for the balance on the account, and this hadn't applied here. Its call to W was out of courtesy and W could have returned the call. It ought to have been clear that the account was closed as W couldn't access it later on 12 April 2024 and W could have clarified this and seen the payment to its new account. There was no financial loss for W.

My provisional decision

I issued a provisional decision on 10 October 2024. I set out below what I said.

I needed to decide whether Barclays should pay W compensation and if so the amount. The facts of what happened as I understood them weren't substantively in dispute.

It seems that taking into account postal and processing times Barclays acted on W's instruction dated 2 April 2024 to close the account on 12 April 2024. It tried to call W that day. But having received no answer closed the account and sent the remaining funds to W's new account. It issued a statement dated 15 April 2024 which stated that *"This is your final statement to the account"*.

It's clear from what has been said that W was monitoring what was happening with the account and was expecting a payment from the account net of fees of £12.24. It wasn't able to log into the account on the afternoon of 12 April 2024, having it seems based on Barclays records been able to do so that morning. Barclays hadn't acted at the speed W expected in closing the account leading to it emailing and then writing again. Barclays didn't meet W's customer service expectations including in responding to that further correspondence. There was no financial loss, but it explains the inconvenience and need to follow this up.

I firstly needed to say that complaint handling isn't a separate regulated activity and W was able to refer its complaint to this service when Barclays hadn't responded. So, I wouldn't be making any award for that. W is a separate legal entity which can't suffer distress. There has been no financial loss and Barclays acted on W's instructions. Barclays has apologised for poor communication. And I'd assessed that in the context of the information W reasonably had and had access to. I'd taken into account our published guidance about compensation, and I'd reached my own view. Not every shortcoming or element of inconvenience warrants compensation and here I thought that the apology now made in the light of what happened is sufficient.

So, for these reasons I said I wouldn't be making any award of compensation in this case.

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.

Barclays said it accepted my provisional decision and didn't have any further comments to make.

W initially said in response that it would now accept our investigator's recommendation of £50 compensation. And when our investigator told W that this was no longer an option given the stage the case had reached it said that it wanted me to explain why her recommendation was 'wrong.' And that it actually had now accepted what she'd said.

Barclays in any event never agreed to pay *any* compensation to W and didn't accept our investigator's recommendation. And so, the case had to go for an ombudsman's decision. The purpose of my review is to reach an independent view of the complaint using my own judgement and explain what I think.

As I've said above the facts of what happened are largely agreed – and W hasn't disputed anything I've said about that. I've set out W's position on the complaint and also what

Barclays has said in response. I've said I've taken into account our published guidance about compensation. And as the result of my assessment is that I reached a different outcome to the investigator I've given W the opportunity to comment. And it's done so. But it hasn't given me any reason to change my view other than it now it seems agrees with our investigator's recommendation. I'm not going to say anything more about that save that I reached a different view on the same evidence and that is a potential outcome of our process.

I'm afraid I see no reason to change my assessment and I won't be awarding compensation for the reasons I've already given.

My final decision

My decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask W to accept or reject my decision before 14 November 2024.

Michael Crewe
Ombudsman