

The complaint

Mr K complains Metro Bank PLC (Metro) acted unfairly when it closed his bank account without explanation.

What happened

Mr K says Metro wrote to him in mid-July 2024 informing him it was closing his bank account without any reason. Mr K says in that letter it referred to two other bank accounts which had already been closed. Mr K says in that letter Metro's wording was threatening when it mentioned it wouldn't provide a status report on his banking account, if asked for one by another banking provider.

Mr K says Metro only explained the reason for the closure in a subsequent phone call suggesting his behaviour on the phone to its colleagues wasn't acceptable, which he disputes.

Metro says it apologised to Mr K that the account closure notice letter detailed two other bank accounts which had already been closed. Metro also says it has apologised if Mr K felt the wording in its letter came across as threatening when it referred to providing a status report and that wasn't its intention. Metro says it isn't obliged to explain the reason why it has chosen to close Mr K's bank account in line with its terms and conditions, but it has subsequently informed him of this in separate communications. Metro says it has paid Mr K £75 as it partially upheld part of Mr K's complaint.

Mr K wasn't happy with Metro's response and referred the matter to this service.

The investigator looked at all the available information but didn't uphold the complaint. The investigator felt Metro had acted in line with its terms and conditions when it provided Mr K with 60 days' notice to close his bank account and it isn't obliged to disclose its reasons for doing so, although this was explained to Mr K in a complaint resolution call.

The investigator felt that while Metro had incorrectly stated two closed bank accounts in its letter in mid-July 2024, it had apologised for that, and he felt the compensation it paid was reasonable. The investigator didn't agree the language used in the letter Mr K received regarding the notice to close the account was threatening.

Mr K didn't agree with the investigator's view and asked for the matter to be referred 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 won't be upholding this complaint and I will explain how I have come to my decision.

I can understand it would be upsetting for Mr K to have been informed Metro were closing

his bank account. When looking at this complaint I will consider if Metro acted fairly when it decided to terminate Mr K's banking relationship with them.

While I understand Mr K doesn't feel Metro should have closed his bank account, it's not for me to tell banks like Metro it must continue a banking relationship when it feels the relationship has broken down. Metro aren't obliged to disclose the reasons why it decided to terminate the banking relationship with Mr K and close his account, but I can see this has been explained in both writing to Mr K and in a complaint resolution phone call, so I'm satisfied these provide Mr K a clear explanation for why his bank account was closed.

What is important here is Metro provides a reasonable notice period to allow Mr K to find alternative banking arrangements. From the information I have seen, Metro wrote to Mr K in mid-July 2024 informing him it would be closing his account in mid-September 2024 which is in line with its terms and conditions, and I'm satisfied that is reasonable in the circumstances.

While I understand Mr K wasn't happy that Metro referred to two other closed bank accounts in its notice to close letter in mid-July 2024, it has apologised for that. Additionally in the same letter Mr K felt the wording regarding the fact it wouldn't provide a status report on his bank account going forward was threatening. While I understand the points Mr K makes, Metro have apologised if it read that way, but it has explained to him this simply meant it wouldn't provide another banking provider with the reason behind its decision to close the account as a measure of reassurance.

Like the investigator I can't see the tone of the letter was aggressive and I'm satisfied Metro have provided Mr K with a clear explanation on this point. Metro have acknowledged it made an error on the closing account letter by incorrectly stating two other accounts that had been closed earlier, but it paid Mr K £75 by way of apology, and I'm satisfied that is fair here. While Mr K will be disappointed with my decision, I won't be asking anymore of Metro.

My final decision

My final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr K to accept or reject my decision before 3 December 2024.

Barry White
Ombudsman