

The complaint

Mrs M complains National Savings and Investments (NS&I) closed her savings account without her authority and failed to investigate this properly.

What happened

Mrs M says she held a savings account with NS&I which she hadn't used for some time and on making enquiries was told the account had been closed in March 2023. Mrs M says she never gave any instructions to close the account and believes NS&I may have inadvertently combined her account with her mother in law's account with the same surname and initial and similar address, as they lived next door.

Mrs M says NS&I have failed to properly investigate the matter.

NS&I says it has apologised to Mrs M that its initial response to her enquiry about the account closure was vague and paid her £50 for the poor service provided. NS&I says it has very limited information about the account closure now, as this was closed in April 2013, but it has provided Mrs M with what information it could find about this and where the payment was sent.

Mrs M wasn't happy with NS&I'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 pointed out that given the passage of time that had passed, the information available surrounding the account closure was extremely limited, so she wasn't able to support Mrs M's assumptions about the account closure.

Mrs M 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 and frustrating for Mrs M to believe she still held a savings account with NS&I only to be informed it was closed in 2013. When looking at this complaint I will consider if NS&I have properly investigated the closure of Mrs M's savings account in 2013 and if it had made any mistakes when doing so.

Mrs M's complaint centres around the fact her savings account with NS&I that she was told was closed in April 2013, wasn't done with her authority. In addition, Mrs M says she believes her account may have been combined at some point with her mother in law's account with NS&I, who has the same initial and surname and lived next door. Mrs M says she believes this as the closing balance NS&I says it paid out was for a sum higher than she

thought was held in her account with them.

I understand the points Mrs M makes and I have some sympathy with her situation here, but as the investigator has pointed out it has been over 10 years since the account was closed by NS&I and as a consequence there is very limited information available to support Mrs M's claim it wasn't her who gave the authority to close the account at that time.

I should say I would only expect businesses like NS&I to hold on to its records for around six to seven years after the account closure. But here given the time that has passed there's not sufficient information for me to say with any certainty that a mistake has been made here, even if Mrs M doesn't feel she authorised the closure of the account and transfer of the funds to the account detailed.

It's fair to say the passbook details Mrs M provided doesn't really help the investigation here as its last entries date back to 1998 and although Mrs M says further transactions have taken place since to prove her point about the balance outstanding, there's unfortunately no evidence to support that.

While Mrs M will be disappointed with my decision, I won't be asking anymore of NS&I here.

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 Mrs M to accept or reject my decision before 9 December 2024.

Barry White
Ombudsman