

The complaint

Mr B complains that Nationwide Building Society (NWide) blocked two junior ISA accounts.

What happened

Mr B had two junior ISA (JISA) accounts for two of his children. On 21 September 2023, NWide wrote to him to ask for up to date ID information.

On 29 September 2023, Mr B visited a branch of NWide to provide the information but then NWide wrote to him to say it was still needed – the letter was dated 5 October 2023.

On 12 October 2023, NWide wrote to Mr B again to say the information was still awaited.

Mr B called NWide on 25 October 2023 to say he had visited the branch to provide the information. NWide apologised and said they would sort matters out.

The accounts were then blocked on 29 October 2023.

Mr B called NWide again on 3 November 2023 – because the accounts had been blocked.

Mr B complained. He said:

- He had visited the branch to provide the information but due to NWide's error this hadn't been recorded in the correct place on NWide's system.
- As a result, he had been chased for the information again. And when he called NWide on 25 October 2025, he was told the letters would stop, blocks wouldn't be applied and an email to confirm would be sent.
- But then – the accounts were still blocked; and the email that had been promised wasn't sent.
- He then had to make another call on 3 November 2023 to sort things out, and his wife also made another call on that day.
- NWide paid compensation of £75, but Mr B says he wants £150 for the inconvenience caused – he had to call NWide and the accounts were blocked between 29 October 2023 and 3 November 2023. This meant he couldn't monitor the accounts and the money being paid into them.

NWide apologised for what happened and paid compensation of £75.

Mr B said this wasn't enough and said he wanted £150. He brought his complaint to us. Our investigator said NWide didn't need to do anymore and therefore didn't uphold the complaint.

She said:

- She made the point that Mr B could've provided the information online but chose to

go to a branch.

- NWide made an error when Mr B visited the branch and didn't record the information correctly.
- This led to the further letters being sent to Mr B and then the accounts were blocked.
- NWide had made a further error on 25 October 2023 when, on the call, they said the accounts wouldn't be blocked, but they then were.
- She considered the impact of NWide's errors. She thought £75 was enough to settle the complaint – because the junior ISA accounts were restricted anyway, so withdrawals weren't allowed. But payments into the accounts were still possible. So she thought the impact didn't warrant further compensation.

Mr B didn't agree. He said NWide had asked him to go to a branch – he wasn't given the option of providing the information online. And the impact was significant – as he wanted to monitor the JISAs to ensure savings goals were being reached.

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.

I can appreciate Mr B's experience was a frustrating one. I can see:

- NWide asked him to provide the ID information for the JISAs and asked him to go to a branch (in this respect, I've seen the letters did ask him to go to a branch, and he didn't have the option of online access).
- He visited the branch and provided the information.
- But due to NWide's error, the information wasn't recorded correctly and NWide then wrote to him again, and subsequently blocked the two JISAs – between 29 October 2023 and 3 November 2023.
- NWide made a further error on the call on 25 October 2023 (which I listened to) – they said the information had been received and would be added correctly in their systems; the accounts wouldn't be blocked and an email would be sent to confirm all of that. But – none of that was done as the accounts were still blocked and the email wasn't sent.
- So, Mr B had to call NWide again on 3 November 2023 (I listened to that call also). And then matters were put right and the accounts were unblocked.

It's not in dispute that NWide made errors here, and I need to decide the impact of those and whether the compensation paid by NWide (£75) is enough.

The impact on Mr B was:

- He had to make two calls to NWide, the first one lasted 35 minutes; the next one lasted 17 minutes.
- The JISAs were blocked for six days.

I accept Mr B had to make two calls to NWide and this was time consuming.

He's argued the blocks impacted him as he wasn't able to see and monitor the accounts. But he could pay money into them. I can see he made regular monthly payments into the accounts on or around 1st monthly – so he couldn't see the payments in on 1 November 2023. But equally, I don't consider that because he couldn't see the accounts for six days led to such a degree of inconvenience that cause me to say a higher amount of compensation is justified. The criteria for how we decide on compensation is set out at:

<https://www.financial-ombudsman.org.uk/consumers/expect/compensation-for-distress-or-inconvenience>

Applying these tests – I am satisfied that NWide don't have to pay a further amount of compensation.

And so, while I accept Mr B will be disappointed by my decision, I am not asking NWide to pay anything more here.

My final decision

I do not uphold his complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr B to accept or reject my decision before 22 November 2024.

Martin Lord
Ombudsman