

The complaint

Ms M complains about how Nationwide Building Society dealt with her cancelled international payment request.

What happened

Ms M says she made an international online payment from her account on 28 August 2024. She says she realised after the payment was made, that she no longer needed to make the payment and called Nationwide to cancel it. Ms M says she spent some time on the telephone to Nationwide and was eventually told the payment had been cancelled. But on 2 September 2024, she used her account card and realised the payment had gone through resulting in her account being overdrawn. Ms M says Nationwide called her and offered £75 compensation but dealt badly with the call and said she was at fault. She would like appropriate compensation and the overdraft as well as international payment fees refunded.

Nationwide accepts it made a mistake during the first telephone call and should have told Ms M that it would try and cancel the payment but there were no guarantees. It says by the time Ms M called it, the payment could not be recalled in any event. Nationwide says it offered Ms M £75 compensation but says the account becoming overdrawn was not its fault and Ms M was liable for the £20 international payment fee.

Ms M brought her complaint to us, and our investigator thought Nationwide had dealt fairly with the complaint by offering a fair and reasonable compensation amount of £75. The investigator thought Nationwide had dealt appropriately with the telephone call and that Ms M could have checked her account before withdrawing money that meant the account became overdrawn.

Ms M doesn't accept that view and questions why she would check her account when she knew she had money in it.

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 have come to the overall view that Nationwide has made a fair and reasonable compensation offer.

There is no dispute here that Ms M made the payment herself on 28 August 2024 and that Nationwide incorrectly told her that it had been cancelled. I have no doubt Ms M was caused distress and inconvenience in those circumstances and would have relied on Nationwide to have provided the correct information. But I am satisfied Nationwide has fairly apologised for what took place and offered a fair as well as reasonable compensation amount of £75. I don't think, for the reasons I will explain, that Ms M suffered any financial loss as a result of what took place or that the impact of the mistake justifies further compensation. I also think that the compensation offer is broadly in line with the type and amount of awards we would have made for this type of mistake.

Nationwide should have told Ms M that there was no guarantee it could cancel or stop her payment. I can see from Nationwide's records that in reality this payment, despite Nationwide's efforts, could not have been recalled or stopped. So, I am satisfied that even if Ms M had been given that correct information that she would have been liable for the £20 international payment fee. I am also satisfied Ms M would have agreed to that fee when the account was opened as part of the account terms and conditions. So, it follows that I can't fairly direct Nationwide to refund that fee that was due regardless of the incorrect information given to Ms M in the first telephone call.

I appreciate Ms M's account became overdrawn as she withdrew money. I am satisfied that Ms M was reasonably entitled to conclude that the payment had not left her account and I don't think in those circumstances the onus was on her to check her account to make sure she had enough money to withdraw. It follows that I agree with Ms M that any overdraft fees that may have correctly been applied ought to be refunded.

I have looked carefully at Ms M's bank statement and the type of account she holds. I can't see any evidence of an overdraft fee being charged and think on balance that the account she holds does not make a charge for an overdraft fee. I don't think Ms M or Nationwide has provided any evidence of such an overdraft charge and so I can't fairly direct Nationwide to refund any such fee. I can see evidence of interest being charged of £0.35, but don't require Nationwide to refund that and think the overall compensation award of £75 fairly considers the overall impact on Ms M as well as the very small interest charged. I can't fairly direct Nationwide to refund the international payment fee as it was Ms M that made it and can see it has fairly offered to assist in the payment return.

I appreciate Ms M says that Nationwide didn't deal appropriately with her during the telephone call in which its final response was discussed. I am sorry to disappoint Ms M but having listened carefully to that call I am satisfied Nationwide fairly explained its position and dealt appropriately with it.

Putting things right

Nationwide has made a fair and reasonable offer of £75. I will of course leave it to Ms M to decide if she wishes to accept that offer.

My final decision

My final decision is that Nationwide Building Society has made a fair and reasonable compensation offer of £75 which I direct it pays Ms M if this decision is accepted. Ms M's acceptance of that offer and this decision would be in full and final settlement of this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Ms M to accept or reject my decision before 31 December 2024.

David Singh
Ombudsman