

## **The complaint**

Mr F complains that Nationwide Building Society (Nationwide) won't give him the £175 switching incentive it offered to new customers shortly after his switch to Nationwide.

## **What happened**

In Mid-September 2024, Mr F switched his bank account from his previous bank to a Nationwide account. Shortly after this, Nationwide announced a switch incentive offer, where new customers could receive a £175 incentive award if they switched. Mr F contacted Nationwide to ask if it would be willing to offer the amount as a good will gesture as he had only missed out by a few days but Nationwide told him it wouldn't be able to do so. Mr F was unhappy with this response so complained. When his complaint wasn't upheld, he contacted us.

One of our investigators reviewed the complaint but didn't think that Nationwide had done anything wrong. He acknowledged Mr F's disappointment but confirmed he thought that as the incentive hadn't started when Mr F switched accounts, he wasn't entitled to the incentive amount.

Mr F requested an ombudsman to review the complaint. He said that while he understood his account opening was before the incentive period, he felt it was unfair of Nationwide to treat new customers differently to existing customers. He went on to say that Nationwide also claim to share profit with its members but then gives some of the profit away to entice new members, therefore the profits are not truly being shared.

As a resolution couldn't be reached, the complaint was passed to me to make 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 am in agreement with the investigator for broadly the same reasons.

I understand how strongly Mr F feels about this complaint. He has raised a number of points and although I may not mention every point raised, I've considered everything he has said but limited my findings to the areas which impact the outcome of the case. No discourtesy is intended by this. It just reflects the informal nature of our service.

I have reviewed the terms and conditions of the switch incentive and I can see that it was valid from 25 September 2024 and both parties have agreed the incentive period started after Mr F switched his account. The terms and conditions explain that those who qualify for the incentive will be able to receive the £175 incentive award but as Mr F switched his account before the incentive period started, I agree that Mr F doesn't qualify for the award.

Mr F has also acknowledged the above but asked Nationwide if it would be willing to pay the £175 as a good will gesture. I can understand why Mr F would be disappointed that he missed out on the incentive, especially as he only missed it by a few days, however, I don't think that means that Nationwide have done anything wrong or treated Mr F unfairly by not allowing him to have the incentive amount, therefore I won't be telling it to do anything differently from what it has done.

Mr F has said in response to the investigators view that he is unhappy Nationwide treat members and non-members differently. And that Nationwide says it shares its profit with members but then gives some of its profit away as incentives. As explained by the investigator, we are not in a position to instruct financial businesses in regard to its general processes or principles. That would be the role of the regulator, the Financial Conduct Authority. (FCA). Our role is to look at the impact of a particular incident on a particular person or persons, which is what I have done above.

### **My final decision**

For the reasons above, I do not uphold this complaint

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr F to accept or reject my decision before 12 February 2025.

Sarah Green  
**Ombudsman**