

The complaint

Mr P complains Wise Payments Limited closed his personal account without any explanation. To put things right he wants the account reopened.

What happened

Wise contacted Mr P asking him to provide additional information in order for him to access the account. It explained that it needed this information in order to comply with regulations in force in the European Union.

Mr P changed his address with Wise to a UK address but was still required by Wise to provide additional information.

Mr P provided Wise a world passport which he says was issued in Washington.

Wise reviewed the information it had and made the decision to close the account with immediate effect. Unhappy with this, Mr P made a complaint to Wise.

In its response, Wise said it had closed the account in line with its terms and conditions. Wise explained it couldn't provide any more information.

Unhappy with Wise's response, Mr P brought his complaint to our service to investigate.

One of our investigator's looked into the complaint and found Wise had acted fairly and reasonably in closing Mr P's account. They didn't recommend Wise take any further action in relation to the complaint.

Mr P disagreed, he considered Wise to have violated his personal and human rights. Mr P went on to explain why he provided his world passport, and that Wise had a copy of his Polish passport and his Polish driving license.

As there was no agreement, this complaint has been passed to me to decide.

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 decided not to uphold this complaint. I'll explain why.

If there's something I've not mentioned, it isn't because I've ignored it. I'm satisfied I don't need to comment on every individual argument to be able to reach what I think is the right outcome. I do stress however that I've considered everything that Mr P and Wise have said before reaching my decision.

Account providers are regulated and must take certain actions in order to meet legal and regulatory obligations. These obligations generally cover the entire period of its customer

relationship – from application to eventually the end of the relationship. This includes know your customer checks (KYC) and/or customer due diligence. It's worth noting these checks include not just the verification of a customer's identity, but also establishing the purpose and intended nature of the business relationship and origin of funds. That sometimes means account providers need to restrict, or in some cases go as far as closing customers' accounts.

Wise is entitled to close an account just as a customer may close an account with Wise. But before it closes an account, it must do so in a way, which complies with the terms and conditions of the account.

The terms and conditions of the account which Wise and Mr P had to comply with, say that Wise could close the account by giving two months' notice. And in certain circumstances it can close an account immediately.

Mr P believes that his personal and human rights have been violated, and that he'd already provided a copy of other forms of ID to Wise. As explained above, Wise obligations are ongoing, and whilst it already had forms of ID for Mr P, I don't think it was unreasonable for it to make requests for further information.

Following those requests, and having looked at the information given to me by Wise, I'm satisfied that it was entitled to close the account in the way it has done, and has done so fairly and in line with the terms of the account. In doing so, Wise had written to Mr P and signposted him to the relevant parts of its terms and conditions that it was exercising this action under.

I can understand why Mr P would like a detailed explanation as to why Wise acted in the way it did. But Wise is under no obligation to do so. I would add too that our rules allow us to receive evidence in confidence. We may treat evidence from banks as confidential for a number of reasons – for example, if it contains security information, or commercially sensitive information. Some of the information Wise has provided is information I consider should be kept confidential.

I do appreciate this matter will have caused Mr P some trouble and inconvenience. But having looked at what's happened in this particular case, I can see no basis on which I might make an award against Wise given that I don't think it failed to properly follow its own procedure when it closed Mr P's account.

So I'm not going to ask Wise to compensate Mr P for any trouble or upset this may have caused.

My final decision

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr P to accept or reject my decision before 2 April 2025.

Simon Yates
Ombudsman