

## **The complaint**

Ms O complains about mistakes Barclays Bank UK PLC ("Barclays") made when it closed her accounts.

## **What happened**

In May 2023 Barclays closed the accounts of its customers who were living in the European Economic Area (EEA). Ms O was living in the EEA.

Ms O had five accounts with Barclays before they were closed. Two accounts were in sterling, one was a euro account, one was a US dollar account, and one was a Canadian dollar account. Ms O says the closure of her accounts meant that she lost online access to them, so she found it very difficult to manage her money. She says she lost access to some of her money for months.

Ms O also complains that her account balances were transferred to other accounts contrary to her instructions, causing her exchange rate loss, significant stress and inconvenience. She has been clear that she did not want any currency exchange of any kind to occur.

Ms O says she spent around 50-60 hours dealing with this matter over eight months. In that time she had several phone calls and email exchanges with Barclays and visited her local branch on more than one occasion. She also spent time transferring money to Barclays so it could help resolve the matter.

Ms O complained to Barclays. It acknowledged its mistakes and agreed to pay Ms O £500 compensation for what happened. Ms O didn't think that was enough. She remained unhappy, so she complained to the Financial Ombudsman Service.

Our investigator looked into what happened. He said Barclays took the commercial decision to close Ms O's accounts because she was living in the EEA. It gave her more than three months' notice of the account closures. So he thought that Ms O was given sufficient notice about the closure of her accounts. However, he said there was no dispute that Barclays didn't follow her instructions about what to do with the money in the accounts it was closing. Ms O had told Barclays she wanted to send the balances of her sterling accounts to a sterling account based in Northern Ireland, and the balance of her euro account to a euro account she had with another provider. However, Barclays sent all the money in her sterling accounts and her euro accounts to the euro account she had with the other provider. It also sent the money in her US dollar and Canadian dollar accounts to the euro account she had with the other provider.

Our investigator understood why Ms O was so annoyed about what had happened, but he thought the £500 compensation Barclays had offered Ms O was a fair and reasonable amount to resolve this complaint. He noted that Barclays had already absorbed the exchange rate losses.

Ms O disagreed and asked for her complaint to be reviewed by an ombudsman. So this complaint was 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've come to the same conclusion as our investigator. I'll explain why.

I'll begin by saying that the facts of this complaint are not in dispute. Barclays has acknowledged that it caused Ms O significant inconvenience by not following her instructions when it closed her bank accounts. It also acknowledged that it took around eight months for the matter to be resolved.

The outstanding issue in this complaint is the amount of compensation Barclays should pay Ms O to resolve this matter. Mr O says she should receive more than £500 compensation.

She has been clear about the impact of this matter on her and referred me to case studies on the Financial Ombudsman Service's website about awards.

I've considered those case studies and thought carefully about the impact of this matter on Ms O.

I've no doubt that this matter caused Ms O significant trouble and upset over an eight-month period. Ms O has been clear that she spent many hours over that period dealing with this matter; that she was caused considerable stress and was subject to significant uncertainty when she couldn't access or manage her money. I'm conscious that Ms O had significant balances in her accounts when they were closed.

However, I'm satisfied that the £500 compensation Barclays has offered her fairly covers her for the distress and inconvenience caused. This level of compensation is in line with awards this service would make in cases where the impact of a business's mistake has caused considerable distress, upset and worry – and where significant inconvenience and disruption was caused that needed a lot of effort to sort out over many months.

I appreciate that Ms O is likely to be disappointed by this decision, but I think that Barclays' offer to pay her £500 is a fair and reasonable amount to resolve this complaint.

## **My final decision**

For the reasons set out above, my final decision is that Barclays Bank UK PLC doesn't need to do more to resolve this complaint. It should pay Ms O the £500 compensation it has already offered her unless it has already done so.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Ms O to accept or reject my decision before 22 July 2025.

Laura Forster  
**Ombudsman**