

The complaint

Mr H complains that The Co-operative Bank Plc delayed in dealing with, and gave him wrong information concerning, closure of an old savings account.

What happened

Mr H had held a savings account with B, a Building Society taken over by Co-op Bank. He had a passbook with a small balance recorded in it. He contacted Co-op Bank in September 2024 so that he could have the balance transferred to his account. He was told that he would need to make a claim for unclaimed funds. He was advised to go into a branch with ID, which he did on 13 September, and he completed the necessary forms.

Mr H then chased his claim on a number of occasions through messaging and calling the bank. He was provided with a link to check his accounts and finally, following a call with customer services, on 29 October he was told that his account with B was closed and the balance had been paid out in cash. Mr H strongly denied that any cash had been paid to him. The adviser logged a complaint for him.

Co-op Bank's final response letter to Mr H in November 2024 agreed that there were delays in processing his claim which had caused him inconvenience. It also said that in respect of a call on 25 October whilst he wasn't promised a call back within a certain time nevertheless the adviser should have at least made a courtesy call. It still asserted that his account had been closed and a cash payout made. It paid Mr H £100 compensation for the inconvenience caused to him.

On referral to the Financial Ombudsman Service, Co-op Bank explained that, having reviewed the records again, it found that Mr H had opened a savings account with it in October 2021, and that the balance of the account with B had been transferred there. And that Mr H transferred that balance to his account with another provider in July 2022, following which his account was closed. It apologised for not providing that information to Mr H before and offered a further £50 compensation.

Mr H didn't accept that offer, although given that information he was able to trace the payment into his account. Our Investigator reviewed the matter and thought that Co-op Bank's offer, together with the previous compensation paid, was reasonable.

Mr H didn't agree and the matter has been passed to me for an Ombudsman's consideration.

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 should explain first of all that this decision concerns only Mr H's complaint about the monies in his former account with B. I can't review Co-op Bank's processes for dealing with other customers with similar accounts. Nor can I award compensation for issues outside

what actually happened during Mr H's contact with Co-op Bank about his said account.

As I've noted above, Mr H first raised this matter with Co-op Bank in early September 2024. I've noted that after completing the necessary forms at the branch, he was told that it would take about two weeks to deal with. However Mr H had to message Co-op Bank and call it on several occasions throughout September and October. He only finally received Co-op Bank's response concerning the whereabouts of his funds with B on 29 October.

Even then, and after Co-op Bank's final response, the matter wasn't satisfactorily explained to Mr H. He has told us that he would have recalled withdrawing his funds in cash, and as this appeared to have been done in the branch, it would've been noted in his passbook.

So Mr H had to make a complaint to this service before getting the full answer as to what had happened to his funds.

I've noted that in his call with an adviser on 25 October, Mr H was told that they would contact the previous adviser to chase matters up. That adviser wasn't at that time available. He wasn't provided with a specific date for a call back, however he did have to chase up the matter again. I agree that this was unsatisfactory.

I've considered the compensation paid, of £100, and that offer of a further £50. I've taken account of the delay by Co-op Bank in resolving this matter and the fact that Mr H had to contact it on a number of occasions. I've also taken account of the fact that no monies were missing. My view is that the amount paid for the delay and inconvenience caused to Mr H of £100 was fair and reasonable. I also think that the further £50 in respect of giving him wrong information and having to correct that, is a fair and reasonable way of settling the complaint.

My final decision

Co-op Bank has already made an offer to pay a further £50 (on top of the £100 already paid) to settle the complaint and I think this offer is fair in all the circumstances.

So my decision is that The Co-operative Bank Plc should pay £50.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr H to accept or reject my decision before 18 April 2025.

Ray Lawley
Ombudsman