

## **The complaint**

Mr M is unhappy with Nationwide Building Society. He held an account with former building societies that were subsequently taken over by Nationwide and Mr M said he never closed his account. He still had the passbook. When he recently requested Nationwide to pay out the money he was told the account no longer exists and he wouldn't get a pay out.

## **What happened**

The account had been originally with Building Society "S". S was taken over by Building Society "P". P was then taken over by the Nationwide. Mr M had a record from prior to the takeover of P showing an account balance of £116.81.

Mr M said he left the account running with Nationwide gaining interest. He feels he is owed the £116.81 and 18 years of further compound interest on top of that.

Nationwide apologised as Mr M was also unhappy about the service he received from the Nationwide online chat service. But it said it hadn't done anything wrong. It said on the chat service it had responded promptly to his questions and that it didn't have the facility for documents and photographs. Regarding the account Nationwide said it no longer held any statements for the account. It said it was closed more than six years ago and due to the amount of time that had passed since it was no longer required to hold account information.

Mr M remained unhappy and brought his complaint to this service.

Our investigator didn't uphold this complaint. She accepted Nationwide's evidence that the account had been closed. She said it wasn't unusual for there to be limited information after so many years. Our investigator noted accounts can be closed and funds withdrawn without the physical passbook. Despite Mr M's position that the account can't be closed without the passbook she confirmed accounts can be and the passbooks presence isn't mandatory.

Mr M didn't accept this and asked for his complaint to be passed to an ombudsman for 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.

Mr M said he left the money that had transferred from P in the Nationwide account gaining interest. He said Nationwide said the account no longer existed and there's no money for him to take. He said it should still have a record. He feels he's owed somewhere in the region of £180 which he said was the original amount plus interest for the last 18 years.

He said it was Nationwide's responsibility to be able to still provide him with the details of his account and the money all these years later.

Having reviewed the online chat between Nationwide and Mr M I don't think Nationwide acted unreasonably. It did appear to respond to questions within a reasonable time frame.

But I accept what Nationwide said about it not doing anything wrong. It has checked all account records and found nothing. It said the account was closed over six years before and it doesn't now hold an account or the funds. If there isn't a record of the account still being in existence according to Nationwide's records it is most likely the account was closed and the balance withdrawn at a date and time after the last recorded passbook entry.

Based on the evidence provided I think Nationwide has acted fairly and reasonably here.

### **My final decision**

I don't uphold this complaint.

I make no award against Nationwide Building Society.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr M to accept or reject my decision before 16 June 2025.

John Quinlan  
**Ombudsman**