

## **The complaint**

Ms B complains about the service received from Barclays Bank UK PLC (“Barclays”) when trying to access funds held in a dormant account. In particular, Ms B is unhappy with the communication from Barclays regarding what was required to action this stating that it failed to respond or acknowledge documents and correspondence she’d sent and gave incorrect advice regarding what was needed to update her address and access her funds.

## **What happened**

Ms B held a savings account which Barclays took over in 2013.

Ms B wrote to Barclays on 21 February 2019 complaining that despite repeated attempts to contact it regarding changing her address for her savings account she wasn’t able to do so as Barclays required her to reregister her address with a code sent out to her old address which she couldn’t access as she doesn’t know who lives there. Within her letter Ms B confirmed the sort code and account number of her savings account and both her new and old address and enclosed a copy of her passport.

Barclays responded to Ms B’s complaint on 2 May 2019 writing to her new address explaining that it wasn’t able to update addresses over the phone but as an alternative to a code being sent to her old address, she can visit a local branch of Barclays to update it. But as Ms B had already moved and finding it difficult to attend a branch due to family and work commitments Ms B never did so.

Barclays sent dormancy letters to Ms B’s old address (the one registered on the profile for her savings account) from July to October 2019 notifying her it intended to make the account dormant but not living at this address Ms B never received the letters.

Barclays ledger statements show that from June to August 2019 it held Ms B’s old address on her savings account and that this was updated to her new address in September 2019.

In August 2024 Ms B attended a branch of Barclays to locate and reclaim the funds in her dormant savings account and after not being able to trace the account was told she needed to complete the process online. Ms B raised a complaint about the service she received from Barclays in branch. Following the advice on Barclays website regarding reclaiming funds held in dormant accounts Ms B sent Barclays certified copies of her passport and driving license along with a bank statement for her savings account to assist Barclays in locating this on 20 August 2024.

The results of a recent DSAR show that Barclays received all these documents.

Following this Ms B received a letter from Barclays enclosing a claim form and a request for bank account details to credit fund and certified ID. Ms B responded to this on 6 September explaining that she’d already sent in the required documents including her certified ID and payment instructions.

Barclays responded on 24 September confirming it had located her account and saying Ms B would need to provide a form of photographic ID and document confirming her full current address but didn't say why the previous documents submitted hadn't been accepted.

In response to Ms B's complaint Barclays agreed that although the branch staff couldn't trace Ms B's dormant account in branch its staff could've been more helpful by submitting a dormancy claim and certifying her ID and confirmed that feedback about this had been provided.

Being dissatisfied with this Ms B wrote again to Barclays raising a further complaint on 6 October and brought her complaint to this service. To resolve her complaint Ms B wanted Barclays to arrange the transfer of funds from her dormant account to her nominated bank account, send a final statement, reimburse her for her postage costs and pay 8% interest on the funds from the date she first contacted Barclays with her ID and payment instructions and £100 compensation for the distress and inconvenience caused. Ms B sent Barclays numerous emails from early December 2024 chasing the matter up and asking for a response in relation to the documentation it needed.

Barclays eventually confirmed in its letter dated 20 December that Ms B had written to it on 20 August but didn't attach any identification documents. It confirmed Ms B had written to it on 6 September to provide the relevant documents but failed to provide her payout details and asked she send them again with all the documents together. It offered Ms B £50 for any distress and inconvenience and £50 as a gesture of goodwill to cover any postal costs and asked Ms B to provide her account details for crediting the same.

Barclays confirmed to this service that Ms B had sent in ID but that it was not adequate proof of address as it contained a bank statement from 2011 which was outside of acceptable timescales.

In January 2025 Ms B again submitted the same ID to Barclays and sent further emails asking Barclays to acknowledge this. Ms B explained she spent a considerable amount of time having the documents certified and did everything asked of her yet Barclays still hadn't released her funds or responded.

Despite submitting the exact same ID on this occasion Barclays confirmed that the ID received from Ms B on 10 January 2025 was sufficient and that its dormancy team had began the process of releasing the funds to her. They acknowledged that there had been poor communication relating to the ID it had received and delays on its side and offered £250 additional compensation on top of the £100 already offered as well as 8% compensatory interest on the funds from 28 August 2024 up until the date the funds are eventually released.

Ms B was dissatisfied with this, she says Barclays have continually failed to respond to her and there appears to be repeated mistakes or dishonesty on Barclays behalf regarding what documents are needed and had been received by it regarding her dormancy claim.

One of our investigators looked into Ms B's concerns and agreed that the service Ms B had received regarding this hadn't been good enough but thought that the £350 compensation in total (including £100 previously offered) for the distress and inconvenience caused was reasonable overall for everything that had happened.

They agreed that 8% simple interest should be paid from 28 August 2024 as that is when the evidence shows Barclays had all the documents needed to release the funds from her dormant account and is the earliest date Barclays could've processed the documents by. They were satisfied that Barclays followed its internal procedures at the time for updating

addresses and so didn't think Barclays needed to do anything more regarding this element of Ms B's complaint.

Ms B disagreed and disputes the advice she was given regarding updating her address in 2019 was correct and says that if she'd been given correct advice about this she would've been informed earlier about the dormancy of her account and accessed her funds sooner. Ms B believes interest should be calculated from 2019 rather than August 2024 as offered.

Ms B says she wasn't able to visit a branch by July 2019 to update her address and that Barclays knew she had moved and could've let her know about the dormancy rules without compromising the security of her funds by writing to her new address but still wrote to her at the old address.

Barclays say that the correct information about updating Ms B's address was provided at the time and that although Ms B informed it of her new address when raising her complaint in February 2019 as it was unable to find or trace her savings account or profile for this under the details provided it wasn't possible to link this to the new address she provided.

Barclays have confirmed that the two profiles it held for Ms B were merged when her accounts were closed.

As Ms B is unwilling to accept Barclays offer her complaint has been progressed for an ombudsman's 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.

My role is to look at the problems Ms B has experienced and see if Barclays has done anything wrong or treated her unfairly. If it has, I would seek – if possible - to put Ms B back in the position she would've been in if the mistakes hadn't happened. And I may award compensation that I think is fair and reasonable.

Barclays have accepted its service has been poor regarding the customer journey Ms B's had in trying to reclaim the funds from her dormant account and I agree. Barclays failed to provide proper support in branch, failed to respond on numerous occasions to Ms B's letters and emails and incorrectly told her that it hadn't received documents when it had. This resulted in Ms B having to spend time and money having documents recertified and submitted and chasing Barclays for answers.

So all I have to decide is whether what Barclays have offered to put things right for Ms B is fair. And for the following reasons I think it is.

To resolve her complaint Ms B initially said she wanted Barclays to arrange the transfer of funds from her dormant account to her nominated bank account, reimbursement for postage costs, £100 compensation and for Barclays to pay 8% interest on the funds from the date she first contacted Barclays with her ID.

Barclays have now dealt with Ms B's dormancy claim and so it is able to release her funds to her as she has requested and have offered to pay 8% interest from the earliest point that it thinks it could've processed her claim - 28 August 2024 – until Ms B receives her funds as well as offering £350 compensation for the distress and inconvenience experienced.

I accept that further mistakes and issues have come to light since Ms B brought her complaint to this service, but as this would put Ms B in the position she would have been in if Barclays mistakes hadn't happened, and is more than what Ms B initially asked for and in-line with what I'd usually recommend in this situation, I think this offer is fair.

Ms B wants Barclays to pay interest from when she first contacted Barclays regarding updating her address in 2019 as that is when she believes had Barclays done everything right – including advising her about how she could update her address – she would've been able to access her funds.

I don't know what Barclays procedures were at the time for updating a customer's address so I can't say if the advice provided by Barclays was correct and that a branch visit was necessary. But whether this was the case or not I don't think this would make a material difference to the overall outcome here, as if Ms B was able to update her address by post it's not possible to say for sure when she would've done this or if Barclays would've found the profile for Ms B's savings account and had a chance to update this before it sent out the dormancy letters. And as this financially makes little difference in terms of interest earned on around the £30 held in Ms B's account, I don't think this matters in terms of putting things right for Ms B.

I accept that Ms B has been put to some inconvenience by Barclays failings and is undoubtedly very frustrated by the experience. But ultimately she has got what she wanted and the compensation on offer I think is fair and in-line with what I'd expect and so I'm not going to ask Barclays do anything more.

### **My final decision**

For the reasons I've explained, I uphold Ms B's complaint and direct Barclays Bank UK PLC pay any outstanding compensation of £350 in total plus 8% interest on the funds the subject of Ms B's claim from 28 August 2024 to the date Ms B receives them.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Ms B to accept or reject my decision before 15 July 2025.

Caroline Davies  
**Ombudsman**