

The complaint

Mr C complains that Nationwide Building Society didn't tell him whether an account switching payment would be taxable and that it gave him internet links that didn't work.

What happened

Nationwide said Mr C opened an online chat with it on 25 September 2024 and asked about the tax position of switching payments. It accepted that it instead provided some general information about tax on savings interest. And directed him to a 'broken' internet link for a Nationwide internet page and to a government website. It apologised for this. Nationwide said in its final response letter to the complaint that it's only the government that can confirm the tax position for Mr C but that its understanding is that switching payments aren't classed as income.

Our investigator didn't recommend that Nationwide do anything more. He noted that Mr C had raised a complaint in the online chat within 10 minutes of Nationwide's response to his question. And said that he'd by then researched the position, and the payment wasn't taxable. It also appeared now that Mr C wasn't eligible for any such payment. So, our investigator considered that the apology from Nationwide was a sufficient response to his complaint.

Mr C didn't agree and wanted his complaint to be reviewed. He said that he had to do further research because the internet links didn't work, and he wanted to be sure of the position. He thought he was eligible for the payment at the time. And he disagreed that financial compensation wasn't appropriate.

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.

It's not in dispute here that Mr C didn't receive good service. And that the agent he dealt with should have made sure the links provided were working. That caused Mr C some inconvenience but as our investigator says the information is that he'd researched the position himself within 10 minutes. And in the event he wasn't going to be eligible for a payment.

Nationwide has apologised for what happened, but Mr C wants financial compensation. I've taken into account our published guidelines about compensation. And this sets out that *"just because there's been a mistake it doesn't necessarily follow that we would always award compensation – especially when the impact is minimal."*

I've applied my own judgement here in light of what Mr C has said and what happened. And I know I'm going to disappoint him when I say that I find Nationwide's apology here to be a reasonable and fair response to his complaint. So, I won't be requiring it to do anything further.

My final decision

My decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

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

Michael Crewe
Ombudsman