

## **The complaint**

Mr F complains that Nationwide Building Society closed a basic bank account.

## **What happened**

Mr F opened a basic bank account with Nationwide in January 2025. But the next day, Nationwide told Mr F it was going to close the account. It said this was because Mr F didn't meet the criteria to bank with it. Dissatisfied, Mr F complained to Nationwide and referred the complaint to us.

Our investigator looked at the complaint and didn't think it should be upheld.

Mr F didn't agree. The complaint has been referred 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.

I don't uphold the complaint. I'll explain why.

Mr F's account was a basic account offered under the terms of the Payment Accounts Regulations 2015. These regulations require designated businesses – which includes Nationwide – to offer basic bank accounts to any consumer who meets the eligibility criteria set out in those regulations. To be eligible for a basic account, a customer must be legally resident in the UK and either not hold a payment account with any United Kingdom credit institution that offers features at least as good as a basic bank account – or be ineligible for all payment accounts offered by the institution that are not payment accounts with basic features.

The bar to close or refuse an application for a basic account is a high one. That said, the Payment Account Regulations also allow Nationwide to refuse applications for basic accounts or close them in certain circumstances.

In this case, Mr F opened the account on 17 January 2025 and Nationwide wrote to him on 18 January 2025 to say it had closed the account. This was before Mr F had used the account. Effectively, Nationwide rejected Mr F's application.

I've thought about what Nationwide has said about that. It has sent us some information in confidence about why it closed the account. I'm satisfied some of this information is sensitive so cannot be shared with Mr F. But based on what I've seen, I'm not persuaded Nationwide needed to provide Mr F with this account.

Mr F says that Nationwide previously closed one of his accounts because it believed Mr F had misused it. Specifically, Mr F had disputed a large number of transactions under the payment card network's chargeback scheme – and a number of these were unsuccessful.

Mr F doesn't think his previous conduct is relevant. He says the regulations only allow Nationwide to close an account based on his use of the new account.

I've considered what Mr F has said. But this doesn't change my conclusions. I note that Nationwide's regulatory obligations require it to consider everything it knew about Mr F when deciding to begin a new business relationship. So if Nationwide believed Mr F had previously mis-used an account, that was plainly something it was required to take into account when deciding whether it could open a new one. I appreciate that Mr F wants to know more, but given what I've said it wouldn't be appropriate for me to tell Nationwide to share more than it already has about the reasons it closed the account.

I'm also mindful that Mr F says he had other accounts with other financial institutions. As such, I can't see the closure had a material impact on him. I appreciate Mr F says he spent a lot of time contacting Nationwide to find out what had happened. But this is something Mr F chose to do – all he needed to do was raise a complaint with Nationwide and then refer the complaint to us.

### **My final decision**

I don't uphold the complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr F to accept or reject my decision before 12 September 2025.

Rebecca Hardman  
**Ombudsman**