

## **The complaint**

Mr L and Mrs L have complained that Nationwide Building Society has failed to locate their account.

## **What happened**

Mr L and Mrs L discovered an old account passbook for a Greenwich Building Society account. The last entry into the book was in 1973, and the balance was £250. They raised a query through 'my lost accounts' online, but couldn't locate the account. So, they contacted Nationwide (as Greenwich Building Society merged with Portman Building Society in 1997, which in turn became part of Nationwide in 2007).

Nationwide has explained it has no record of the account, or of it having been closed. However, it wouldn't retain details of accounts closed more than six years ago.

One of our investigators looked into what had happened. And he was satisfied that Nationwide had done all it could to locate the account. Its special dormancy team, which has access to historic records of account transfers from Greenwich to Portman, had found no record of the account being transferred. This suggests the account was closed before the merger with Portman in 1997.

Mr L and Mrs L disagreed. They felt they'd provided clear evidence that the account remained active, in the form of the passbook. Had the account been closed, the passbook would have been disfigured or retrieved by Greenwich. They didn't think that the fact the account couldn't be located was proof that it had been closed.

## **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.

Having done so, I'm not upholding it. While I understand Mr L and Mrs L's position, it's the case that the account cannot be located, despite best efforts. These have included their own, through a website, and Nationwide's. I'm also conscious that records were kept after the transfer on existing accounts – and no records exists of this account. On balance, this strongly suggests its closure.

The existence of a passbook doesn't change my mind. These were never a necessity for closing an account. For example, if a book has been lost or stolen.

## **My final decision**

For the reasons given above, it's my final decision not to uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr L and Mrs L to accept or reject my decision before 14 October 2025.

Elspeth Wood  
**Ombudsman**