

## **The complaint**

X complains that National Westminster Bank Public Limited closed his account without notice and lodged a fraud-related marker on the industry database CIFAS in his name.

## **What happened**

X had a current account with NatWest.

In May 2025, NatWest decided to review X's account after fraudulent funds had been paid into the account. Following this NatWest decided to close X's account immediately. NatWest also decided to record a fraud-related marker with CIFAS against X.

X was informed about NatWest's decision. X was unhappy about NatWest's actions and complained. He said he had opened the account intending to use it for saving. And had not used it. He said he wasn't responsible for any of the activity on the account and was a victim of fraud.

In response NatWest said it had reviewed and closed X's account in line with the terms and conditions. It also said it hadn't done anything wrong when it recorded the CIFAS marker.

X remained unhappy, so he referred a complaint to this service. X said the CIFAS marker was causing him problems including having difficulty opening bank accounts and trouble with his work.

One of our investigators looked into X's complaint. After looking at everything, the investigator said that X had brought his complaint to us about the CIFAS marker too late under the rules we must consider – outside of six months from when NatWest issues its final response letter. But said we could investigate X's complaint about NatWest closing his account. Based on all the evidence the investigator said NatWest hadn't done anything wrong when it had closed X's account.

X accepted what the investigator said about the CIFAS marker but disagreed with the investigators view on the closure of his account.

As no agreement could be reached the matter has come 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 would add too that our rules allow us to receive evidence in confidence. We may treat evidence from financial businesses as confidential for a number of reasons – for example, if it contains information about other customers, security information or commercially sensitive information. Some of the information NatWest has provided is information that we

considered should be kept confidential. This means I haven't been able to share a lot of detail with X, but I'd like to reassure him that I have considered everything.

I appreciate that X is upset that NatWest closed his account. And the lack of information made the situation more frustrating. But for me to uphold this complaint, I must be satisfied that the bank has done something wrong. And in this case, I don't think it has. I'll explain why.

As the investigator has already explained, NatWest has extensive legal and regulatory responsibilities they must meet when providing account services to customers. They can broadly be summarised as a responsibility to protect persons from financial harm, and to prevent and detect financial crime.

NatWest will review accounts to comply with these responsibilities. It's common practice for banks and other financial service providers to restrict access to accounts to conduct a review. This can happen regardless of how long a customer has been with a bank. The terms and conditions of X's account also make provision for this to happen.

Having reviewed all the evidence, including the information NatWest has shared with us in confidence, I'm satisfied that NatWest were acting in line with its legal and regulatory obligations when it reviewed X's account. I appreciate that X wants to know more about why NatWest did what it did. But NatWest isn't obliged to tell X why it reviewed his account, and I don't believe it would be appropriate for me to require it to do so as much as he'd like to know.

Sometimes following a review, a bank will decide to close an account, which is what happened here. NatWest is entitled to close an account with X just as he is entitled to close his account with NatWest. It's generally for banks and financial businesses to decide whether or not they want to provide, or to continue to provide, banking facilities to any particular customer. Unless there's a very good reason to do so, this service won't usually say that a bank must keep a customer or require it to compensate a customer who has had their account closed. But they shouldn't decline to continue to provide an account without proper reason, for instance of unfair bias or unlawful discrimination. And they must treat new and existing customers fairly.

NatWest have relied on the terms and conditions of X's account when closing it. The terms and conditions outline that NatWest can close a customer's account with two months' notice, and in certain circumstances they can close an account immediately. Here they closed X's account immediately. For NatWest to act here they needed to meet the criteria to apply their terms for immediate closure

NatWest has provided some further details of its decision-making process, I'm sorry but I can't share this information with X due to its commercial sensitivity. But I've seen nothing to suggest NatWest's decision around closing X's account was unfair. So, it wouldn't be appropriate for me to ask NatWest to pay X compensation since I don't find NatWest did anything wrong when it closed X's account. I'm also satisfied that NatWest closed X's account in line with the terms and conditions.

I understand of course why X wants to know the exact reasons behind NatWest's decision to close his account. It can't be pleasant being told you are no longer wanted as a customer. But NatWest doesn't disclose to its customers what triggers a review of their accounts. And it's under no obligation to tell X the reasons why it closed his account, as much as he'd like to know. So, I can't say it's done anything wrong by not giving X this information. And it wouldn't be appropriate for me to require it to do so now.

In summary, I recognise how strongly X feels about what's happened. I don't doubt it has been a frustrating and worrying time. So, I realise X will be disappointed by my decision. But,

overall, based on the evidence I've seen, I can't say NatWest have acted unreasonably and treated X unfairly in taking the actions it did. So, I won't be asking NatWest to do anything more to resolve X's complaint.

**My final decision**

For the reasons I've explained, my final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask X to accept or reject my decision before 28 January 2026.

Sharon Kerrison  
**Ombudsman**