

The complaint

Mr B complains about a home insurance policy he thought he had with NATIONAL WESTMINSTER BANK PUBLIC LIMITED COMPANY and the service he has received from the bank. A relative, Mr W, brings this complaint on his behalf.

What happened

Mr B banks with NatWest and in January 2025 he visited a NatWest branch to notify it of his new address. He asked the staff member he spoke to whether they could change the address on his home insurance policy as well – but they told him they couldn't, because the insurance company is a subsidiary of NatWest but a separate company and so he would need to notify it separately.

Mr B says he was surprised to learn that the insurer was a subsidiary as he had understood he was insured through NatWest. Branch staff then phoned the insurance company in order for Mr B to speak to them. But they couldn't find Mr B's details and said he had never had a policy with them. Mr B was shocked and upset, and stopped the insurance payments – but a further payment was then taken a few days later.

Mr W wrote to NatWest multiple times and he and Mr B visited the branch, but they say they received either no replies or unacceptable ones, and letters and emails were sent to the wrong addresses. Mr B wanted a refund of all the payments he had made for a non-existent insurance policy for around 13 years.

U K Insurance Limited trading as Natwest Insurance responded to the complaint. They said that Mr B did in fact have an insurance policy with them, and they had given him the wrong information in January. They cancelled the policy and backdated the cancellation, apologised, and paid Mr B some compensation.

NatWest wrote to Mr B saying it had referred his complaint to the insurer as it was their responsibility. Through Mr W, Mr B referred his complaint about NatWest to us. He considered it, not the insurer which had told him he wasn't insured with them, responsible for what had happened.

Our Investigator found that the insurance policy wasn't associated with Mr B's bank account, as part of a package for example, and it was the insurer – not NatWest Bank – which was responsible for the administration of the policy. While Mr B and Mr W had dealt with bank staff to an extent in this matter, the Investigator didn't think they had treated Mr B unfairly.

Mr W asked for an Ombudsman's review. He said that NatWest was the only company Mr B had ever dealt with regarding his insurance policy, it had taken monthly payments for the policy from his bank account, and it should take responsibility.

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've come to the same conclusion as our Investigator, for much the same reasons. While Mr B is a customer of NatWest Bank because he has a current account with it and while he, and Mr W on his behalf, have dealt with it to an extent in this matter, I'm satisfied that this complaint is for the most part about the administration of Mr B's home insurance policy. NatWest Bank is not responsible for that or for the insurer's handling of Mr B's and Mr W's enquiries and complaint, which it relayed to the insurer. U K Insurance Limited trading as Natwest Insurance is responsible for that as the insurer. They have responded to this complaint and accepted responsibility for the complaint, and a complaint about them is now being investigated separately.

The monthly payments for the policy were made each month from Mr B's NatWest bank account for many years, but I don't find that NatWest did anything wrong in making those payments. Its records show that they were collected by the insurer by direct debit. The insurer has responded to Mr B's complaint about payments made to the policy after it should have been cancelled, so it's not appropriate for me to deal with that here in this complaint against NatWest.

I've taken into account everything Mr W has said about the level of service he and Mr B received in trying to sort this matter out and the frustration, inconvenience and distress they have been caused, as well as the money spent on correspondence. I don't consider NatWest Bank responsible for any of that. It directed Mr B and Mr W to the insurer as I would have expected and I don't think the service it provided fell short such that I can fairly uphold this complaint.

My final decision

My final decision is that I don't uphold this complaint about National Westminster Bank plc.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr B to accept or reject my decision before 5 January 2026.

Janet Millington
Ombudsman