

The complaint

Mr T is unhappy that Nationwide Building Society didn't pay him the £200 incentive when he switched his current account.

What happened

In July 2025 Mr T switched his current account from another provider to Nationwide to take advantage of a member exclusive £200 switch offer. To qualify for the £200 incentive there were terms and conditions that needed to be met. One of those was to pay at least £1000 into the account Mr T switched into and he needed to do this within 31 days of telling Nationwide he wanted to switch.

Mr T had until 8 August 2025 to pay £1000 into the new account. However, money already in the account didn't count towards the £1000 requirement and neither did transfers from other Nationwide accounts or Visa credits.

During the 31 days Mr T received four payments into his account. £79.53 that came across as part of the switch which was counted towards the £1000 requirement. £1000 was transferred from another Nationwide account Mr T held and £300 was transferred from Mr T's friend which also came from a Nationwide account, so Nationwide have excluded these payments. There was a further £836.84 which did count. So, in total Nationwide said Mr T had £916.37 of qualifying payments into the account during the 31 days. As this didn't meet the £1000 requirement he wasn't entitled to the £200 incentive.

Mr T complained about this. He felt that the terms and conditions weren't clear and the payment from his friend, whilst coming from a Nationwide account, should still count as a result. When reviewing the complaint, Nationwide first told Mr T he would receive the incentive. But the adviser realised they had made a mistake as they had counted a payment into the account on 12 August 2025, which was outside of the 31 days. They contacted Mr T to explain, apologised for the mistake and confirmed he didn't qualify for the incentive. They also awarded £30 compensation for their mistake.

Mr T brought his complaint to this service. Our investigator didn't uphold the complaint in respect of the incentive payment. And said that the £30 they had paid Mr T for their mistake was fair and reasonable in the circumstances. As Mr T remained unhappy it has been passed 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.

The terms and conditions of the switch offer set out the agreement between Mr T and Nationwide and outline what Mr T needed to do to qualify for the £200 incentive payment. They say:

“What you need to do to get the offer

Do the following things within 31 days of us opening your Nationwide account. If you’re switching into an existing account with us, do them within 31 days of telling us you want to switch:

Pay at least £1000 into your Nationwide account you’ve switched into. Money you are transferring as part of the switch from your old account will count. If you’re switching into an existing Nationwide account, money already in that account won’t count. Transferring money from other Nationwide accounts or Visa credits won’t count.”

So, it is clear that £1000 needs to be paid into the account within 31 days of the switch notification to Nationwide and that transfers from other Nationwide accounts won’t count. I understand that Mr T interpreted this to mean his own Nationwide accounts given that it also references things he would do directly such as transfers in from an old account. Whilst I understand his thoughts here it doesn’t say that specifically and does have a wider interpretation.

I also note that Nationwide sent a message to Mr T on 29 July 2025 which said:

“Make sure you get your current account 200 pound switch offer payment for switch ending xxxx. You need to transfer 1000 pounds in from an account outside of Nationwide and pay for something with your debit card by 08/08/25.”

So even if Mr T had interpreted it to mean his own Nationwide account, I think this reminder does make it clear that to qualify, transfers into the account need to come from a different provider. And it also provided an opportunity for Mr T to clarify it before the offer timed out.

These incentives are generally run as a way to increase business so I can understand why they have that exclusion in there as transferring money from an account held with them doesn’t meet this desire.

I can see that Nationwide did provide Mr T with incorrect information when they told him he qualified for the incentive as they had mistakenly considered a payment outside of the 31-day window. However, I’m satisfied the apology and £30 compensation they paid was fair and reasonable in the circumstances.

Overall, taking account of all the circumstances, I don’t think it was unclear that transfers from a nationwide account wouldn’t be counted.

My final decision

My final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I’m required to ask Mr T to accept or reject my decision before 16 January 2026.

Karin Hutchinson
Ombudsman