

The complaint

Mr C complains about the way in which Nationwide Building Society handled the closure of his account. As a result, he says he has missed out on a Fairer Sharer payment of £100.

What happened

Mr C held a current account with Nationwide. Nationwide is a mutually owned building society. That is, it does not have shareholders but is owned by its members; and membership is granted to customers when they open a qualifying account.

Depending on business performance, Nationwide makes an annual payment of a share of its profits each year to qualifying members. It calls this a Fairer Share Payment. In 2025 it decided to make a payment of £100 to eligible members.

To qualify for the payment, a customer had to have a qualifying current account and either a qualifying savings account or a qualifying mortgage. As well as conditions about account balances and activity, the published conditions of the 2025 scheme included:

“To be a qualifying current account, your account must have been open on 31 March 2025 and any additional requirements depend on the type of current account you had on that date.”

At some point before 21 February 2025 Mr C applied to a different bank to switch his current account through the current account switching service (or CASS).

On 21 February 2025 Nationwide wrote to Mr C to confirm it had received a switch request. The letter asked him to get in touch if he had not authorised the request. On 28 February 2025 Mr C's new bank wrote to tell him that the switch had been completed.

Mr C complained that, because of the switch, he had not received the Fairer Share Payment. Nationwide said that was because his account was no longer open on 31 March 2025; that was a condition of payment. Mr C said that he had not instructed Nationwide to close the account and that the letter of 21 February had not been delivered until after the account had been closed.

He referred the matter to this service, where one of our investigators considered what had happened. He noted that we had previously considered a very similar complaint but had concluded that we had no power to consider that complaint. That was because Mr C had brought the complaint in his capacity as a Nationwide *member* rather than as a *customer*. He did however consider the complaint that Nationwide had closed the account without proper instructions and without giving Mr C the chance to stop it.

The investigator did not recommend that the complaint be upheld. Mr C did not accept the investigator's assessment and asked that an ombudsman review the case.

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.

Mr C has not suggested that he did not instruct his new bank to arrange for his current account to be moved under CASS. That is a service by which a customer can apply to open a current account and the bank receiving the application contacts the customer's existing account provider so that the new account can be opened and the balance transferred, along with, for example, existing direct debit and standing order instructions. The CASS website says that the operation should take no more than seven working days.

It is, therefore, correct that Mr C did not tell Nationwide directly to close his account. His new bank did, because he had asked it to do so, as part of the switch process. I cannot therefore properly say that the closure of the account was not authorised by Mr C.

The Fairer Share Payment terms were, in my view, very clear in saying that the payment would only be made to members who had an open current account on 31 March 2025. Mr C did not have an open current account, because he had given instructions through the switching service to close it.

I do not accept that Nationwide prevented Mr C from stopping the account switch. Had he changed his mind, he could have contacted Nationwide or his new bank, or both. But neither of them had any reason to think that Mr C might have wanted to change the instructions he had given, and so the switch continued within the usual timeframe.

My final decision

For these reasons, my final decision is that I do not uphold Mr C's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr C to accept or reject my decision before 30 January 2026.

Mike Ingram
Ombudsman