

The complaint

Mr Y complains that Blantyre Credit Union Limited will not let him close his account online. The credit union trades as Thistle Credit Union, and I'll refer to it as "TCU".

What happened

Mr Y had an account with TCU. It had a very small balance, and Mr Y told TCU that he wanted to close it.

TCU says that, to close an account, a customer must either attend the branch or make contact by telephone. Mr Y says that is unfair. He opened the account online and could have closed it online had he wanted to do so within 14 days of opening it. But the cost of travelling to the branch or calling the credit union (at 35p a minute on his mobile phone plan) is disproportionate to the account balance. He believes that logging on to his account should be sufficient proof of his identity to enable the account to be closed.

Because TCU insisted that Mr Y attend the branch or call it, Mr Y referred the matter to this service. One of our investigators considered what had happened but did not recommend that the complaint be upheld. They thought that the credit union's requirements were reasonable.

Mr Y did not agree with 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.

The Financial Ombudsman Service was set up to resolve certain individual complaints about financial services. It is not, however, a regulator and so cannot tell a financial service provider how it should run its business.

That means in turn that we will not usually interfere with the way in which a financial business exercises its commercial judgment; that is primarily a matter for its own discretion. As long as a commercial discretion is exercised legitimately, we will not generally say that it should have been exercised differently.

In this case, I believe that it is for TCU to decide what it needs to close an account and what procedure it should adopt. I appreciate of course that in a case such as this one – where the time and costs involved in closing an account might seem disproportionate to its balance – that is frustrating, but I do not believe I can fairly say the credit union should act differently. And I acknowledge that other financial businesses might have different processes, but that does not mean that TCU's is unfair, still less that I should require it to be changed for Mr Y.

My final decision

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

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr Y to accept or reject my decision before 6 February 2026.

Mike Ingram
Ombudsman