

## **The complaint**

Mr D complains Bank of Scotland plc trading as Halifax didn't do enough to warn him before closing his accounts and also about the poor service he received when this happened.

## **What happened**

When Mr D complained, Halifax accepted it could have communicated more clearly, both before closing his accounts and afterwards when he phoned and spent longer than expected on calls. It apologised and paid him £125. However, Halifax said it had given proper notice of its intention to close the accounts and that the closures were made after careful consideration and in line with its business terms.

Halifax didn't agree it was responsible for Mr D's decision to pay for a flight back to the UK in order to process cheque payment for the account balances. So Mr D brought his complaint to this Service.

Our investigator didn't uphold Mr D's complaint, mainly saying:

- Halifax had acted fairly and within the terms and conditions when closing his accounts.
- Halifax had been willing to cancel the cheque on Mr D's instructions and send the remaining funds electronically, until he changed his mind about this and decided to wait for the cheque to arrive.
- Ultimately it was Mr D's decision to return to the UK to cash the cheque so Halifax wasn't responsible for reimbursing his flight costs.
- The customer service Mr D received could've been better as he'd had to spend too much time on the phone and Halifax gave him conflicting information – but the £125 paid already was fair compensation for this.

Mr D asked for a final decision by an ombudsman, so his complaint came 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.

Having done so, I've decided not to uphold Mr D's complaint. I'll explain why.

On 2 June 2025, Halifax wrote to Mr D at the home address it held on record, informing him that it was unable to maintain a banking relationship with him. It told him his accounts would close in 65 days and explained what would happen with any remaining funds. The letter also stressed that he urgently needed to make alternative banking arrangements.

Halifax then closed the accounts in August 2025, after the 65-day notice period expired.

Banks are required to operate risk-based policies and entitled to close accounts where they cannot be satisfied they can continue to meet legal and regulatory obligations. The details of Halifax's decision-making process are confidential and can't be shared with Mr D. But having reviewed the information, I cannot say Halifax acted incorrectly when deciding to end the banking relationship.

I would still expect Halifax to manage the closure process fairly. Having considered its explanation and the relevant terms, I'm satisfied it acted within the account conditions, which allow closure with at least two months' notice. Halifax met this requirement.

I appreciate that Mr D wouldn't have seen information Halifax sent him on 2 June 2025 if he was away from home at the time. But Halifax had no way of knowing this. It communicated with him using the address it reasonably relied upon.

Halifax accepts it missed the opportunity to mention the upcoming closures when Mr D contacted it on 13 June 2025 about his credit card account. But looking at the correspondence overall, I am satisfied that Halifax gave him sufficient notice and enough opportunity to transfer his funds before the accounts closed.

I have also considered what happened after the closures. Halifax said that in exceptional cases it can make electronic transfers. Its internal notes show that Mr D initially planned to try to process the payment using another bank's mobile app. Later, during a phone call I've listened to, he asked Halifax to cancel the cheque and send the funds electronically - but then changed his mind again and decided to wait for the cheque to arrive at his home address.

Mr D explained that he was dealing with challenging personal circumstances at the time, and that the account closures added to his stress and caused money problems. I am sorry to hear this. But based on all the information available, I am satisfied that Halifax:

- acted fairly and in line with the account terms when closing the accounts
- took reasonable steps to notify Mr D of the planned closures and gave him adequate time to move his money
- paid fair compensation for the poor service he experienced when trying to resolve matters
- wasn't responsible for the cost of Mr D's return flight to the UK as it was ultimately his decision to incur this expense, and an electronic payment would have avoided the cost entirely had he chosen that option.

Overall, I'm satisfied that Halifax acted fairly and reasonably in closing Mr D's accounts and that it has done enough to put things right where its service fell short. For these reasons, I don't require Halifax to do anything further.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that I do not uphold Mr D's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr D to accept or reject my decision before 23 March 2026.

Susan Webb  
**Ombudsman**