

The complaint

Mr S complains that The Co-operative Bank plc closed his account in error and without instructions to do so.

What happened

On 18 July 2025 Mr S sent a message to the bank asking how he could close his account. Co-op interpreted the message as an instruction to go ahead with the account closure. When Mr S found out that he could not use the account, he contacted Co-op to be told that the account was in the process of being closed. He explained that he had not intended to close the account, and the bank said the closure process would be stopped. It also arranged for £15 to be credited to the account; the activity on the account would, it said, prevent closure.

In the event, the account was closed. Co-op acknowledged that it should not have been. It arranged for it to be re-opened and offered Mr S £150 by way of compensation. Mr S did not accept that offer. He said he thought £500 would be more appropriate and referred the matter to this service. He said too that he thought the re-opening process had affected his credit score, since Co-op would have carried out a credit check.

One of our investigators considered what had happened. In a preliminary assessment, he said that he thought the offer of £150 was reasonable, but he also said that the bank should take steps to correct Mr S's credit score.

Mr S did not accept the investigator's assessment and asked that an ombudsman review the case. Co-op said that it had not carried out a credit check, so was not responsible for any changes in Mr S's credit score. The case was passed to me for review.

I reviewed the complaint and issued a provisional decision, in which I said:

I have not been provided with documentation concerning what the bank thought was an instruction to close the account, so I cannot comment on its misunderstanding of Mr S's communication.

Be that as it may, the bank has acknowledged that it made an error in starting the closure process. In addition, Mr S did clarify that he did not want to close the account, and the bank confirmed it would stop that process. It did not, however, do so. Even though it reinstated the account, I accept that this put Mr S to some inconvenience, for which he should receive compensation.

I agree with the investigator, however, that the bank's offer of £150 is fair and reasonable in all the circumstances. It is broadly in line with awards in comparable cases and with our published guidelines. In saying that, I note that, until the credit of £15 was made, the account had had a nil balance for over a year. Mr S has said that he intended to start using it again, but that is not entirely consistent with his enquiry about closing it. But any inconvenience which Mr S may have suffered was very much less than would have been the case if, say, a

salary was being paid into the account and if direct debits and standing orders were being paid from it.

As I have indicated, however, the bank has said in response to the investigator's assessment that it did not carry out any credit searches when reinstating the account. I accept that is likely to be the case. And, whilst Mr S has provided evidence of a change in his credit score at the relevant time, I am not persuaded that it was caused by anything Co-op did or did not do.

As I have said, I think the bank's offer is reasonable, but I intend to make a formal award, if necessary, so that Mr S can enforce it, should he need to do so.

Mr S did not accept my provisional decision. He repeated that he had not asked for the account to be closed and that the bank had failed to stop the closure when asked to do so. He said that my proposed award did not properly reflect the cumulative impact of multiple errors. He said too that his initial enquiry and his request to stop the closure were consistent with a wish to continue to use the account.

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.

Much of Mr S's response to my provisional decision repeated my own findings – primarily, the finding that the bank should not have closed the account. Since there is no dispute about that, the only issue for me to decide is what the bank should do to compensate Mr S. His reply to my provisional decision has not, however, persuaded me that I should award any more than £150 – the amount which Co-op offered in response to the complaint. In saying that, I have had in mind that Mr S was not using the account when it was closed in error and that Co-op reopened it promptly.

My final decision

For these reasons, my final decision is that, to resolve Mr S's complaint in full, The Co-operative Bank plc should pay Mr S £150.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr S to accept or reject my decision before 18 February 2026.

Mike Ingram
Ombudsman