

The complaint

Mr B complained that TSB Bank plc applied a full block to his current account without informing him or warning him that failure to take action would result in the suspension of access to his funds.

What happened

In October 2025, TSB reviewed Mr B's account as part of a wider check undertaken in line with its regulatory obligations. It initially sent him an SMS (text message) on 23 October 2025, followed by a further SMS a month or so later on 20 November and a letter on 24 November – all asking him to visit a branch with ID to update his details.

In the absence of any response, TSB sent Mr B a further SMS on 3 December, warning him ‘*... If we don't hear from you by 10 December, we'll need to block your account*’.

When Mr B failed to contact TSB it blocked his account on 12 December.

Mr B only found out when he tried to make a payment from his account on 23 December and he later learned that his salary had been returned as the account was already blocked when his employer had sent the payment.

TSB did not uphold his complaint, saying it hadn't made any error – and account access couldn't be restored until Mr B produced the required ID in branch.

Our investigator concluded that TSB acted appropriately.

Mr B asked for an ombudsman's decision saying that his complaint isn't that TSB isn't entitled to undertake customer due diligence reviews, nor that warnings were not issued, but that fully blocking his account so that his salary was returned over the Christmas period was disproportionate. He told us he's since made alternative banking arrangements.

The 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.

I've independently reached the same overall conclusions as our investigator. I'll explain my reasons.

I appreciate that Mr B considered this merely a data collection exercise and that TSB didn't have any particular fraud concerns or suspicions about the account. But TSB must comply with legal and regulatory obligations including verifying customers' identities and assessing account risks.

When TSB identified gaps in the information it needed from Mr B and its efforts to obtain the missing information had been unsuccessful, it was reasonable to block access to his account until those checks were completed. This was done to protect the funds in the account. I don't consider that action was disproportionate in these circumstances.

I'd expect TSB to treat Mr B fairly and reasonably – and I am satisfied it did. It gave him fair notice of its requirements over a period spanning several months and warned him in advance of its intention to block his account. Mr B hasn't suggested that there was any particular reason he wasn't able to attend a branch or produce the necessary ID. I think it would've been relatively straightforward for him to do so as there were plenty of local branches within reasonable distance as far as I can see.

The account terms and conditions, which Mr B agreed to when opening the account, allowed TSB to restrict account access in this situation.

Given its responsibilities to protect customers and prevent fraud, I don't consider it unreasonable that TSB required Mr B to visit a branch to complete security in person. TSB had a responsibility to pursue its enquiries until it was able to be satisfied that it could safely unblock the account and face-to-face ID verification was a reasonable requirement.

Although Mr B has suggested TSB could have simply restricted outgoing transactions pending verification in these circumstances instead of rejecting his salary, that's not TSB's process when an account is blocked. And given it had data gaps in the information held for Mr B and outstanding verification requirements, I don't consider the account block was unreasonably applied or unfair or disproportionate.

I recognise that Mr B found all this frustrating. But to uphold this complaint I would need to find that TSB did something wrong or acted in a way that wasn't fair and reasonable – and I haven't seen enough here to do so. It follows that I won't be asking TSB to do anything more.

I appreciate that my decision will be disappointing for Mr B but I hope that setting things out as I've done helps explain how I've reached my conclusions.

My final decision

My final decision is that I don't uphold Mr B's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr B to accept or reject my decision before 14 April 2026.

Susan Webb
Ombudsman