

complaint

Mr W complains how National Westminster Bank Plc conducted his business account. He brings this complaint as a director.

background

Mr W bought a number of complaints to the attention of NatWest. To summarise, he complained about the following:

- NatWest's request for details of all shareholders, and identification to be provided for all those named;
- Errors when dealing with Mr W's request to switch banks – in particular failing to honour a cheque which had been issued;
- Lack of communication with Mr W's business once the relationship manager had been removed;
- NatWest's failure to notify Companies House when a charge had been removed;
- The closure of the business account without reason and the subsequent charge of £16.83 attached to the closure.

NatWest only upheld part of Mr W's complaint so he asked this service to look into it further.

When our adjudicator looked into matters, he said that NatWest had gone wrong in some aspects and for that, he thought that an award of £700, plus the refund of £16.83 was fair and reasonable. However, with regards the first issue listed above, he told Mr W that he could not see that NatWest had done anything wrong.

The offer of £700 was broken down as follows - £200 for the lack of communication and failure to update Companies House, and £500 for failing to honour a cheque which was issued during the switching process.

Mr W accepted the adjudicator's finding in respect of the award offered. But he maintained that NatWest was wrong to request details and identification from the shareholders in the way that it had.

Mr W asked for an ombudsman's decision.

my findings

I've considered all the available evidence and arguments to decide what's fair and reasonable in the circumstances of this complaint.

It seems to me that the issues left to decide on in this complaint are narrow – Mr W having accepted what the adjudicator has said about most of his complaint. And I agree that the award offered thus far is fair and reasonable.

Unfortunately, I have to tell Mr W that I am not going to increase this offer as I have seen nothing which suggests that NatWest has done anything wrong by asking for confirmation of shareholders.

NatWest says that these checks were due diligence checks being carried out in accordance with its obligations under money laundering legislation. And it says that it was willing to offer

Mr W alternative ways of providing this information – except it appears that Mr W failed to engage with its staff.

I can see that Mr W is quite firm in his opposition to this request. But I have to tell him that I do not think that NatWest was unreasonable or unfair in the request which it made.

my final decision

My final decision is that I uphold this complaint in part.

For failing to honour Mr W's cheque, for failing to update Companies House and for the lack of communication/support offered to the business, I direct that National Westminster Bank Plc pays Mr W a total sum of £716.83.

I do not uphold the part of the complaint concerning the request for shareholders details.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr W to accept or reject my decision before 3 May 2016.

Shazia Ahmed
ombudsman