

The complaint

Mr V complains that Nationwide Building Society failed to complete an account switching process properly, leaving him his old bank account open with a balance on it which he had to repay to the bank.

What happened

In November 2023 Mr V made a request to Nationwide for his bank account to be switched to it under the switch service. Nationwide started the process and contacted Mr V's old bank. It was advised by that bank that there was a positive balance on Mr V's account and that was transferred to the new Nationwide account on 10 November. Nationwide then completed the switching process.

Mr V was then advised by his old bank that there was a debit balance on his account. He tried to pay money into it but his payment "bounced". He contacted Nationwide and says he was told that it had applied to the wrong bank. However it later advised that his former bank had the responsibility for closing his old account.

Nationwide advised Mr V to contact his old bank. I'm not clear whether he did that but he says that he can still access his old bank account.

On referral to the Financial Ombudsman Service, our Investigator said that after the switch was completed Nationwide can't be held responsible, as it would be for the other bank to close down the account. She said that Nationwide had clearly explained the findings and she was satisfied the switch was completed successfully from its side.

Mr V didn't agree and asked for an Ombudsman's decision.

The matter has been passed to me for further consideration.

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 understand that Mr V believes that because the switch was carried out in accordance with the current account switch service, Nationwide is responsible under the switch guarantee. The terms of that guarantee make both old bank and new bank responsible. Nationwide needed to contact Mr V's old bank and obtain information about any regular payments and then request closure of the account and transfer of the balance. The current account switch service website says the following:

"The Account Switch Service Guarantee means your new bank will switch your payments and transfer your balance, and your old bank will take care of closing your old account."

From the evidence and documents supplied by Nationwide, I think that it did carry out its obligations under the switch service. It doesn't control the closure of the old bank account which is the responsibility of the old bank. Its records show that a transfer of the old balance

was successfully completed. Whilst Mr V says he was told that Nationwide had applied to the wrong bank I don't think that's the case as no switch would have been able to take place.

In conclusion I think it was the responsibility of Mr V's old bank to close down his account and ensure there were no pending payments. I would suggest that he contacts his old bank to ensure that his account is closed down.

My final decision

I don't uphold the complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr V to accept or reject my decision before 6 June 2024.

Ray Lawley
Ombudsman