

## The complaint

Miss A and Mr B complain that Monzo Bank Ltd rejected their application for a joint account. They'd like Monzo to reconsider and open a joint account for them.

## What happened

Miss A and Mr B both have personal accounts with Monzo.

In May 2023, Miss A and Mr B attempted to apply for a joint account with Monzo. However Monzo advised they weren't able to offer a joint account to Miss A and Mr B at the current time.

Miss A and Mr B weren't satisfied with Monzo's response – so complained to the bank. But Monzo didn't uphold Miss A and Mr B's complaint. Monzo said it hadn't done anything wrong in not providing the joint account, they were looking to make joint accounts available to more customers and they'd let Miss A and Mr B know when this changes.

Miss A and Mr B brought their complaint to our service. Miss A explained they'd been trying to save up for a home – which would be easier with a joint account – and the declined application had impacted on her mental health.

One of our Investigators looked at Miss A and Mr B's case. Monzo advised that they couldn't find an application made by Miss A and Mr B, however our Investigator provided evidence of an online chat conversation between Miss A and Monzo about the rejected application. They asked Monzo for more information on why they declined their application. But Monzo didn't reply. Our investigator said that they couldn't determine Monzo had acted fairly in declining their application, so they awarded Miss A and Mr B £100 compensation.

Miss A and Mr B accepted our Investigator's conclusion. But Monzo didn't – in response they provided further details on why they declined Miss A and Mr B's application and asked our investigator to reconsider their outcome.

On reviewing Miss A and Mr B's complaint about Monzo I reached a different conclusion to our Investigator.

I concluded that Monzo followed their risk criteria and acted fairly in declining Miss A and Mr B's joint account application. I asked Miss A and Mr B and Monzo to indicate whether they accepted my thoughts and reply with any further comments.

Miss A and Mr B didn't accept my recommendation. In summary they said:

- They applied for a joint account again a year later but were rejected for a second time.
- Monzo failed to tell them a valid reason
- Monzo's failure to offer an account has made it difficult for them to manage their

finances and plan for the future.

Monzo accepted my recommendation.

As Miss A and Mr B didn't agree I've reviewed my conclusions.

### **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.

In my Provisional Decision I said:

*Our rules allow us to receive evidence in confidence. We may treat evidence from banks as confidential for a number of reasons – for example, if it contains security information, or commercially sensitive information. Some of the information Monzo has provided is information that we considered should be kept confidential. This means I haven't been able to share everything Monzo have given our service with Miss A and Mr B, but I'd like to reassure them that I've considered everything*

*I appreciate that Monzo are entitled to set their own policies and part of that will form their risk criteria. It isn't my role to say the criteria Monzo should have in place for joint account applications. Our service doesn't have the powers to tell a business to change their processes and procedures. But, in looking at the circumstances of individual complaints, I can decide whether I think customers have been treated fairly.*

*Initially, Monzo failed to respond to information requests from our Investigator outlining why they weren't able to offer a joint account to Miss A and Mr B. Monzo have since provided our service with an explanation, advising that Miss A and Mr B were 'automatically rejected' and the application wasn't manually reviewed. But, they also added Miss A and Mr B are welcome to reapply and their application will be reconsidered.*

*I understand that it's disappointing for Miss A and Mr B that Monzo declined their application and didn't provide a reason. And I appreciate it would be easier for them to save for a Mortgage if they had a joint account. But, as I've explained Monzo have shared their reasons with our service in confidence – which they are entitled to do. And I'm afraid having reviewed Monzo's actions here, and taking into account their policies, procedures, legal and regulatory obligations, I can't say they acted unfairly in declining Miss A and Mr B's application.*

*For the reasons I've outlined above I'm not currently planning to ask Monzo to do anything further here.*

Miss A and Mr B rejected my provisional decision. I've considered what they've said and I understand it's disappointing that even after applying for a second time they were rejected, and not having a joint account with Monzo makes it more difficult for them to plan for their future. But, I'm afraid that Miss A and Mr B's response doesn't change whether I think Monzo acted fairly in declining the application – and not providing reasons. I say this for the reasons I've outlined above, namely Monzo have shared their reasons for declining Miss A and Mr B's application with our service in confidence. And, having reviewed this I'm satisfied they've acted fairly in doing so.

It follows I won't be asking Monzo to do anything further.

**My final decision**

My final decision is I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss A and Mr B to accept or reject my decision before 8 April 2024.

Jeff Burch  
**Ombudsman**