

The complaint

Mr A complains that Barclays Bank UK PLC closed his accounts with telling him why. He says that he is unable to open an account with other providers.

What happened

Mr A held three accounts with Barclays – a current account; a Young Persons account; and a savings account.

Mr A has explained that he found out in early December 2023 that his current account had been blocked, because he was unable to use it to make a purchase. When he contacted Barclays, he was told that his account had been blocked and that it would be closed. He was able to attend the branch and withdraw funds. A few days later he received a letter from the bank giving him formal notice of closure.

Barclays declined to tell Mr A why it had closed the account. Mr A was unhappy with its decision to close the account and not tell him why, and he referred the matter to this service. Barclays maintained its position that it was entitled to close the account, but it said that it should have given Mr A 60 days' notice of its intention to do so. It offered Mr A £200 in recognition of that. The bank said that it had not registered any markers which might prevent Mr A from opening an account with a different provider.

One of our investigators considered what had happened but did not recommend that the complaint be upheld. She thought the bank's offer of £200 was fair in the circumstances. Mr A did not accept her assessment, however, and asked that an ombudsman review the case.

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.

Having done so, however, I've reached the same overall conclusions as the investigator did, and for similar reasons.

It is generally for banks to decide whether to provide, or to continue to provide, account services to any particular customer. They can exercise their commercial discretion in such matters and, as long as that discretion is exercised legitimately, this service won't usually intervene. I have considered that issue here, and am satisfied that Barclays' decision to block and then to close Mr A's accounts was a legitimate one. Barclays did not have to tell Mr A exactly why it had decided to close his accounts.

By the time Mr A received formal notice of closure, he knew what was happening and had received funds from his accounts. Barclays accepts nevertheless that it should have given 60 days' notice, but I think that its offer of £200 is reasonable in the circumstances.

I note that Mr A has said he has not been able to open a new account. I am satisfied that Barclays has not registered any markers which might affect his ability to do so – although it

appears that another provider has. I cannot therefore properly hold Barclays responsible for any difficulty which Mr A has experienced.

My final decision

For these reasons, my final decision is that I do not uphold Mr A's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr A to accept or reject my decision before 30 July 2024.

Mike Ingram
Ombudsman