

The complaint

Mr M complains that when he switched to an account with Nationwide Building Society, he was unable to complete transfers of money without a card reader. And that it delayed in sending him a new reader.

What happened

Mr M switched his accounts to Nationwide in October 2022. On 16 November he registered for online banking, but found that he was unable to make transfers out of the account without a card reader. He further complained that Nationwide delayed in sending him the new card reader, and as a result he was unable to transfer money to a higher rate account, as he found that he wasn't eligible for the switching accounts bonus. He also said that he couldn't do some online shopping at preferential rates. He first complained to Nationwide on 8 February 2023.

Nationwide explained to Mr M that he wasn't automatically sent a card reader when he registered for online banking because he had previously held an account with Nationwide and he had been sent a card reader when he opened the former account in 2014. Nationwide did consider that the card reader was necessary for security purposes. It told him that it had ordered a new card reader and when Mr M said this didn't arrive, ordered a further one.

On referral to the Financial Ombudsman Service, our Adjudicator said that Nationwide had acted reasonably in requiring card readers for some online transfers. She also said that it had given a reasonable explanation for not providing a card reader automatically when Mr M opened the new account with Nationwide. She noted that Mr M *had* received the switching accounts bonus of £200. She further said Nationwide had ordered the card readers promptly and could not be held responsible for any delay in the post.

Mr M said that Nationwide had not acted promptly in sending him a card reader as it took it months to do so. He also says that his telephone calls with Nationwide should be listened to as they would show the way it had lied about his case.

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.

Mr M complains about two matters concerning his online account with Nationwide. That when trying to do a transfer from the account to pay bills he was required to use a card reader which wasn't sent to him when he opened his account. Further that Nationwide delayed in sending him a new card reader so he was not able to make transfers out of the account for months.

When Mr M opened the account with Nationwide, he was not sent a card reader. This was

because he had previously banked with Nationwide up until 2019 and had been sent a card reader when he initially opened that account in 2014. I think that is reasonable, although I take Mr M's point that when he was re-registering with Nationwide he could have been asked if he needed a new card reader. That's something for Nationwide to consider. However I do think that Nationwide's use of the card reader system, used by a number of other banks, is a reasonable way of protecting the security of a customer's account. And the terms and conditions which Mr M would have signed up to when he opened the account do say that Nationwide can require an account reader to be used.

I note that, though he may not have been able to make transfers out of the account without the card reader, Mr M had full use of the account in other ways. I have noted that he did receive the switching accounts bonus.

In respect of the delay in receiving a new card reader, I note that Mr M first complained to Nationwide on 8 February 2023. As a result it ordered a new card reader on that day, and when Mr M complained he had not received it, ordered a further one on 15 February 2023. Nationwide has provided evidence to our Adjudicator to show that it made the orders. So I think Nationwide acted reasonably and I can't hold it responsible for any delay in Mr M receiving his new card reader. It was sent by ordinary post and if it was not received in the post I don't think that Nationwide could be said to be at fault. Nationwide did point out to Mr M that he could call in at a branch and pick up a card reader.

In respect of Mr M's telephone calls with Nationwide, I have seen the notes of those calls but I can't see why Mr M should allege Nationwide was lying, or what he thinks it was lying about. As far as I can see it acted on Mr M's complaints and confirmed that in writing. And, as I've said, we have received documentary evidence from Nationwide to confirm that it ordered the card readers.

My final decision

I don't uphold the complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr M to accept or reject my decision before 6 November 2023.

Ray Lawley
Ombudsman