

The complaint

Mr and Mrs P complain that Barclays Bank UK PLC did not close their account down and they charged them further interest.

What happened

Mr and Mrs P paid off their overdrawn balance and requested their account to be closed down, but the account was not closed due to pending interest charges. The interest charge was debited from their account the following month which resulted in the account being overdrawn again. Mr and Mrs P made a complaint to Barclays.

Barclays upheld Mr and Mrs P's complaint and they arranged £50 compensation to be credited to their account and to remove the £4.05 interest charged to the account. They said that the account wasn't closed as the advisor had not recognised there was pending interest, meaning Mrs P had to call and chase this. They said feedback had been passed to the manager of the advisor involved, to address the error and prevent this happening to another customer. Mr and Mrs P brought their complaint to our service as they did not feel the compensation paid was enough for the impact of what happened on them.

Our investigator did not uphold Mr and Mrs P's complaint. She said Barclays not closing their account caused them stress and inconvenience, but she agreed with the compensation provided to them by Barclays. Mr and Mrs P asked for an ombudsman to review their complaint.

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.

Firstly, I'm aware that I've only summarised Mr and Mrs P's complaint points. And I'm not going to respond to every single point made by them. No discourtesy is intended by this. Our rules allow me to take this approach. It simply reflects the informal nature of our service as a free alternative to the courts. If there's something I haven't mentioned, it isn't because I've ignored it. I haven't. I'm satisfied I don't need to comment on every individual point to be able to reach what I think is a fair outcome.

There's no doubt that the Barclays member of staff who originally spoke to Mrs P let her down by not correctly telling her that there was pending interest due to debit the account. She should have been told that the account couldn't be closed down until this debited the account and Mr and Mrs P paid this interest charge. The interest charge was from the period between 21 December 2022-19 January 2023, and it was debited from their account on 13 February 2023. So I'm satisfied that it was charged correctly as Mr and Mrs P's account was overdrawn for some of this period.

But Mr and Mrs P would have been under the impression that the account had already been closed down, so when they found out it wasn't closed down after they had paid the previous

interest charge, and more interest had been debited, then this would have caused them distress. Mrs P was inconvenienced by having to ring Barclays to get this resolved.

So I've considered what would be a fair outcome for this complaint. I know Mr and Mrs P have said they don't feel the compensation is sufficient for the impact that the errors had on them, and I've read everything they've said about this. But the £50 that Barclays paid them for distress and inconvenience is in line with our awards for what happened here. Our awards are not designed to punish a business, and if Barclays hadn't of paid Mr and Mrs P this compensation, then I would have asked them to pay broadly the same as this. Barclays also refunded the last interest charged, even though they charged this in line with the terms of the account. So it follows I don't require Barclays to do anything further.

My final decision

I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr P and Mrs P to accept or reject my decision before 8 November 2023.

Gregory Sloanes
Ombudsman