

## **The complaint**

Mr A has complained that The Co-operative Bank Plc ("Co-op Bank") wrote to him to say that it would close his account as it had detected that it was being used for business purposes.

Mr A wants to know what transactions caused Co-op Bank to think that his account was being used for business purposes.

## **What happened**

One of our investigators assessed the complaint and didn't uphold the complaint.

Mr A disagreed, so the matter was referred for an ombudsman's decision.

## **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 reviewed everything, I don't think that the complaint should be upheld, for broadly the same reasons that the investigator gave.

Co-op Bank carried out a review of Mr A's account in February 2023 and wrote to him to say that it would close his account - as it suspected that he was using the account for business purposes. Mr A contacted Co-op Bank to explain that he was not using the account for business purposes, and after Mr A explained that, Co-op Bank chose to reverse its decision and agreed that Mr A could keep his account open.

Co-op Bank is able to carry out such reviews. It is also able to decide to close a customer's account if it has reason to believe that the account is being operated outside the terms and conditions of the account. In this case, I can see that following its review of the account, Co-op Bank gave Mr A 21 days in which to respond, if he disagreed with the decision to close his account. Mr A did respond and based on his response, Co-op Bank overturned its decision and allowed Mr A to retain his account on 22 February 2023. Therefore, I'm satisfied that Co-op Bank correctly followed its processes in the circumstances.

Mr A has asked for evidence of the payments that caused Co-op to think he was using his account for businesses purposes. However, Co-op explained in its account closure letter sent in February 2023 the reasons why it was considering closing his account. Specifically, Co-op Bank said that it had identified an unusual level of activity relating to cash or credits going into his account. It was these payments into the account that made it appear that the account was being used for business, rather than personal, purposes. So in my view, Co-op has already given Mr A a reasonable explanation as to why it took such action.

So, although Mr A may be frustrated that Co-op initially considered closing his account, overall, I think that Co-op dealt with Mr A fairly in the circumstances.

Finally, I note that Mr A wants compensation for all the stress and inconvenience he has been caused due to the lack of evidence and the stress and disruption to his account. He also mentions timescales.

But I don't think any compensation is warranted in this case. Co-op wrote to Mr A on 10 February 2023 to say that it would be closing his account and it decided to overturn its decision and agreed that Mr A could keep his account on 22 February 2023. In my view, this is not an unreasonable amount of time in which to resolve matters. Furthermore, during this time, Mr A was still able to use his account. So I can't see that Mr A was impacted by Co-op Bank's initial decision to close the account or its subsequent decision to allow Mr A to keep his account.

I note that Co-op Bank issued its final response letter to the complaint in April 2023. I appreciate that Mr A had to wait a few weeks for Co-op Bank's response to his complaint. But Mr A already knew well before then that his account would not be closed and would continue as normal. Because of this, I don't think any compensation is warranted in this case.

### **My final decision**

Because of the reasons given above, I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr A to accept or reject my decision before 28 December 2023.

Thomas White  
**Ombudsman**