

The complaint

Mr S complains that Barclays Bank UK PLC opened the wrong account for him.

What happened

Mr S visited a Barclays branch as he wanted to open a Euro bank account. He says he made it clear that he wanted a Euro account with a chequebook. But Mr S says Barclays opened a foreign currency Euro account instead. And this account didn't offer the facilities he needed. So, he complained to Barclays.

In response Barclays apologised that the wrong account had been opened and offered Mr S £50 compensation in recognition of the inconvenience caused. Mr S didn't think the offer was fair, and so he asked our service to look into his complaint. In doing so, Mr S told us that since raising his complaint he had closed both the foreign currency account and his sterling account held with Barclays and opened account facilities elsewhere. He said that £300 compensation was fairer for the inconvenience caused.

Our Investigator looked into the complaint, but he didn't uphold it. He explained that Barclays had since told this service that the account it opened for Mr S was the only type of Euro account it offered, and that chequebook facilities were available with it. So, he didn't think Barclays had done anything wrong. He noted that Barclays' offer of £50 compensation was still available, but he didn't recommend that Barclays needed to take any further action to resolve the complaint.

Mr S didn't accept the Investigator's outcome. He asked for evidence of what the investigator had relied on. He added that he thought Barclays was in breach of contract by opening the wrong account. Mr S was provided with a recording of a telephone conversation between Barclays and the investigator. But, while the investigator considered what Mr S had said, ultimately, he didn't change the outcome he had reached. As agreement wasn't reached, Mr S' complaint has been passed to me.

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 S wanted a Euro bank account, but he says Barclays opened a foreign currency Euro account in error. From what I've seen, Barclays has changed its stance during the course of this complaint. Initially it said the wrong account had been opened. It has since said it opened the only type of Euro account that it offered.

I've seen that when Mr S' account was opened, Barclays sent him a letter which included an information leaflet. Having looked at this, I can see why Mr S thinks the wrong account was opened. The letter says: *'Welcome to your new Foreign Currency Account. We're pleased to let you know that we've opened your Personal Currency Current Account in Euro for you.'*

And under the heading *'what currency accounts are available'*, the leaflet says:

'We offer two types of currency current accounts:

- *Euro Account specifically designed for euro*
- *Foreign Currency Account available in selected major foreign currencies'.*

That said, while the letter referred to a foreign currency account, it also said the account was a Euro account. So, I'm satisfied the account opened was a Euro account.

I note Mr S has said the account opened was the wrong type of Euro account as it only allowed payments in Euro within Great Britain, whereas he needed an account that allowed international transactions. But the leaflet mentioned above sets out the terms and conditions of both a Euro account and a foreign currency account and, having read the leaflet, I'm persuaded the two accounts are fundamentally the same (apart from the currency they are held in). For example, both types of account offer: the ability to transfer funds abroad, chequebooks on request, a range of ways of depositing money and the same fees and charges applied.

So, when taking both the 'welcome' letter and the accompanying leaflet together, I'm persuaded that Barclays opened the correct account for Mr S. And I haven't seen anything to persuade me that Mr S couldn't use the account for the purpose he said he needed it for. So, I won't be asking Barclays to pay Mr S any additional compensation.

Barclays has made an offer of £50 to Mr S in recognition of any inconvenience caused. Mr S is seeking more compensation as he decided to close both his Euro account and sterling accounts. I'm sorry to disappoint Mr S, but for the reasons given above, I haven't found that Barclays did anything significantly wrong that would warrant a further compensation payment.

Barclays has confirmed its compensation offer is still open. I will leave it for Mr S to decide if he wishes to contact Barclays directly to accept it.

My final decision

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

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr S to accept or reject my decision before 16 October 2023.

Sandra Greene
Ombudsman