

Complaint

Miss F is unhappy that Barclays Bank UK PLC (“Barclays”) closed her account. She also says that Barclays failed to return the funds that were in the account to her.

Background

In August 2022, Miss F’s account with Barclays was closed. Miss F was dissatisfied at this and complained. Barclays didn’t uphold Miss F’s complaint. As Miss F remained dissatisfied, Miss F referred the matter to our service.

One of our adjudicators looked into Miss F’s concerns. She didn’t think that Barclays had done anything wrong or treated Miss F unfairly and so didn’t recommend the complaint be upheld. Miss F disagreed and so the complaint was passed to an ombudsman for a final decision.

My findings

I’ve considered all the available evidence and arguments to decide what’s fair and reasonable in the circumstances of this complaint.

Having carefully considered everything, I don’t think that Barclays acted unfairly towards Miss F and so I’m not upholding her complaint. I’ll explain why in a little more detail.

As our adjudicator explained to Miss F, a bank is generally under no obligation to continue offering an account to a consumer if it doesn’t wish to do so. I know that Miss F is unhappy that Barclays closed her account. However, each financial institution has its own criteria and risk assessment for deciding whether to open (or close) accounts and providing a customer with an account is a commercial decision that a financial institution is entitled to take.

Furthermore, while Miss F says her account was closed without notice, I’m satisfied that Barclays sent her a letter in June 2022 notifying her that her account was going to be closed. I appreciate that Miss F says that she didn’t receive this letter. But as I’m satisfied that they were sent to Miss F’s correspondence address at the time, I think that Barclays took reasonable steps to notify Miss F that it would be closing her account.

I realise that Barclays’ actions will have been very disappointing to Miss F and I can appreciate why the closure of her accounts will have caused her inconvenience. But despite this, I’m simply not in a position to be able to tell Barclays it should have continued offering Miss F an account in circumstances where it legitimately decided it no longer wished to provide one.

Finally, having looked at copies of Miss F’s account ledgers I’ve seen that the account was closed with a zero balance. So I don’t think that there were any funds to be returned at the time the account was closed. If Miss F disputes that her account had a zero balance at this time this is a matter that she will have to take up with Barclays in the first instance.

Overall and having considered everything, I don't think that Barclays has acted unfairly or unreasonably towards Miss F and I'm not upholding this complaint. I appreciate this will be very disappointing for Miss F. But I hope she'll understand the reasons for my decision and that she'll appreciate why Barclays was entitled to close her account in the way that it did.

My final decision

For the reasons I've explained, I'm not upholding Miss F's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss F to accept or reject my decision before 16 August 2023.

Jeshen Narayanan
Ombudsman