

## **The complaint**

Mrs P complains that Barclays Bank UK PLC unfairly closed her ISA accounts.

## **What happened**

Around November 2021, Barclays wrote to Mrs P about her ISA accounts, explaining that there had been no activity on these accounts for a while, so the bank planned to close her accounts. Barclays also explained what action Mrs P could take to prevent her accounts being closed.

Mrs P says she contacted Barclays by phone shortly after receiving these letters and is unhappy that the bank still closed her accounts a few months later.

In its response to Mrs P's complaint, Barclays explained that it closed Mrs P's accounts because it classed the accounts as dormant- given there had been no activity on the accounts for five years. Barclays says it couldn't locate the call Mrs P refers to, but did find some notes around the time to reflect that Mrs P had enquired about restoring access to her online banking. Barclays accepts that Mrs P did get in touch and, although it couldn't re-open her accounts, it offered her £150 compensation because of its error.

Mrs P escalated her complaint to this service, asking that Barclays re-open her accounts, apologise and pay her £700 compensation plus interest. Our investigator concluded that the bank had delivered a fair resolution to Mrs P's complaint. Mrs P doesn't agree, so the complaint has been passed to me to make a final 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 done so, I've decided that Barclays has offered a fair amount of compensation.

The terms of Mrs P's accounts explain that Barclays can close her accounts if she hasn't used them for a long time. The terms go on to explain that the bank will provide notice and instructions on how to prevent closure. I've also seen details of the procedure Barclays follows when deciding whether an account has become dormant. Barclays says Mrs P didn't use her accounts for five years, so I think it was reasonable that it classed Mrs P's accounts as dormant and decided to close them.

Barclays wrote to Mrs P in November 2021, notifying her that it planned to close her accounts. The bank also advised Mrs P on the steps she can take to prevent this happening – which included paying money in, making a withdrawal or contacting the bank. Barclays didn't close Mrs P's accounts until around three months later, so I think it gave her reasonable notice of the closure before it went ahead.

Mrs P says she called the bank a few weeks after receiving the letters. It seems the main purpose of this call was so that she could reinstate access to her online banking. Barclays

couldn't locate the call, so I can't say for certain what was discussed. But the bank accepts that this call was an expression by Mrs P to keep her accounts open. I think this is reasonable. Although I haven't seen anything that suggests she expressly asked for her accounts to remain open, I think that Mrs P's request to reinstate access to her online banking reasonably indicates that she didn't want the accounts to be closed.

Barclays accepts that it acted unfairly by doing by closing her accounts and offered Mrs P £150 compensation. Although the bank cannot re-open her accounts, I haven't seen anything to suggest that Mrs P wouldn't be able to open new ISA accounts with Barclays. Moreover, I can't see that Mrs P experienced a significant financial loss because her accounts were closed – Mrs P hadn't made any recent deposits and the monthly interest she had been earning was for relatively low amounts.

So I think the compensation Barclays has offered is fair. Although I note that Mrs P was dealing with some difficult personal issues around the time, I can't fairly say that what Barclays did wrong caused her significantly more distress and inconvenience – and to a degree that would persuade me that additional compensation would be fair.

Mrs P also referred to delays and poor service she says she experienced from Barclays after she complained. However, complaint handling isn't considered to be a regulated activity, so it isn't within the remit of this service to comment on issues related to how Barclays handled her complaint.

So I won't be asking Barclays to do anything more in relation to this complaint.

### **My final decision**

I'm not upholding this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs P to accept or reject my decision before 6 September 2023.

Abdul Ali  
**Ombudsman**