

The complaint

Mr S complains about delays when completing a transfer from his Nationwide Building Society ISA account.

What happened

Mr S had a fixed rate ISA with Nationwide but found an alternative account with higher returns from another business I'll refer to as C. On 17 November 2022 Nationwide received an ISA transfer request from C. But the ISA transfer form requested a transfer at the existing ISA's maturity date. As the maturity date was more than three months away, Nationwide's systems rejected the ISA request. Mr S has confirmed that Nationwide didn't contact him about the failed ISA transfer.

Nationwide says the next ISA transfer request was received from C on 15 December 2022 and processed with funds being sent the following day. Nationwide says C confirmed the ISA transfer process was completed on 19 December 2022.

Mr S has told us he visited a branch of Nationwide on 15 December and was told the ISA funds had been placed in a holding account but says he wasn't given clear guidance on the process or what would happen next.

Mr S went on to raise a complaint with both Nationwide and C. Mr S has told us that C's complaint was upheld and it agreed to compensate him for the lost interest and service provided. Nationwide didn't uphold Mr S' complaint and said it had correctly processed the ISA transfer requests it received from C. In a follow up final response, Nationwide offered Mr S £25 for failing to contact him after receiving an email.

An investigator at this service looked at Mr S' complaint. The investigator didn't find evidence of delays or mistakes by Nationwide and didn't uphold Mr S' complaint. Mr S asked to appeal and said he remained unhappy with Nationwide's actions. As Mr S asked to appeal his complaint has been passed to me to make a 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.

I can understand why Mr S was frustrated by what appeared to be unexplained delays with his ISA transfer. There were two businesses involved, Nationwide and C. In this decision, I'm only looking at Nationwide's actions and how it handled the ISA transfer process.

I've looked at the first ISA transfer request form Nationwide received and it doesn't ask for an immediate transfer of funds. The transfer request was made on the basis that it should take place on maturity of the existing fixed rate. But Nationwide's confirmed that when the maturity date is more than 90 days away it can't process a transfer on that basis. So the transfer request C made was rejected. I haven't seen anything that shows this was a mistake by Nationwide.

Mr S has asked why Nationwide didn't contact him to explain what had happened. But Nationwide wasn't the party that requested the ISA transfer. I think Nationwide's view that C would update Mr S as required and take any additional steps required as his new ISA provider was reasonable.

Mr S says another ISA transfer request was made by C on 28 November 2022 but Nationwide has no record of receiving that. The next transfer request received was on 15 December 2022. I've reviewed the request form and it includes directions to proceed immediately on this occasion. Nationwide processed the ISA transfer on 15 December 2022 and it was sent to C the following day. I'm satisfied that once Nationwide received a useable ISA transfer request, it proceeded without delay.

Mr S has told us he visited a Nationwide branch on 15 December 2022 and was given unclear information. Mr S says he was told the funds had been placed in a holding account at that time. But that's likely to be broadly accurate as Nationwide has confirmed the funds were processed to be sent to C on 15 December 2022. I appreciate the member of staff may not have been as clear in their explanation as Mr S required. But I think they were trying to assist Mr S and provide an update. Whilst I've taken Mr S' comments into account, I haven't found grounds to award compensation on the basis of his branch visit.

I'm very sorry to disappoint Mr S but as I haven't seen any evidence of delays or problems caused by Nationwide during his ISA transfer I'm not telling it to increase the award or do anything else.

Nationwide offered Mr S £25 for failing to respond to an email earlier this year. I'm satisfied £25 reflects the distress and inconvenience caused and is a fair and reasonable way to resolve Mr S' complaint. As I'm satisfied Nationwide dealt with Mr S' complaint fairly I'm not telling it to increase the award.

My final decision

My decision is that I don't uphold Mr S' complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr S to accept or reject my decision before 26 September 2023.

Marco Manente
Ombudsman