

## **The complaint**

Miss B complains HSBC UK Bank Plc closed her banks accounts without explanation or notice.

## **What happened**

In February 2020, HSBC closed Miss B's accounts. Miss B says she didn't get any notice and only discovered that they had been closed when she attempted to make a purchase on her card.

Unhappy, Miss B complained. In its final response, HSBC said that following an internal review in November 2019, it decided to close her account - and it's not its policy to discuss why. HSBC added that it sent her notice in November 2019 that the accounts would be closed in February 2020 – which is two months' written notice in line with the terms of the account.

Miss B said she didn't receive the notice as it was sent to her address abroad.

Miss B also complained that a job offer made to her by HSBC was withdrawn around this time. A complaint about HSBC withdrawing a job offer, and potential employment, isn't a regulated activity I can consider.

Miss B referred her complaint to this service. One of our Investigator's looked into Miss B's complaint, and they recommended it shouldn't be upheld.

As it wasn't clear if Miss B agreed with what our Investigator said, the complaint has now been passed to me to decide.

## **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 not to uphold this complaint. I know this will disappoint Miss B, so I'll explain why.

Banks in the UK, like HSBC, are strictly regulated and must take certain actions in order to meet their legal and regulatory obligations. They are also required to carry out ongoing monitoring of an existing business relationship. That sometimes means banks need to restrict, or in some cases go as far as closing, customers' accounts.

Having reviewed the information, and considered HSBC's reasons for reviewing Miss B's account, I'm satisfied it was acting line with its obligations.

HSBC is entitled to close an account just as a customer may close an account with it. But before HSBC closes an account, it must do so in a way, which complies with the terms and conditions of the account.

The terms and conditions of the account, which HSBC and Miss B had to comply with, say it could close the accounts by giving her at least two months' notice. And in certain circumstances it can close an account immediately or with less notice.

Having looked at the information given to me by HSBC, I'm satisfied it was entitled to close the accounts in the way that it has done. In reaching this conclusion, I've carefully considered the type of accounts Miss B had. I know Miss B would like an explanation. But HSBC are under no obligation to do so.

Miss B says she didn't receive any notice in the UK, and the letter that gave her two months' notice was sent to her address abroad. Both HSBC and Miss B have given me a copy of this letter. The letter doesn't have Miss B's address on but says 'online copy'.

Miss B appears to have opened this account when she came to the UK for studies in 2016. So I can understand why HSBC has her overseas address on its systems. But even if I were to accept this letter was sent overseas, I don't think HSBC have done anything wrong here. That's because Miss B would've given this address to HSBC for correspondence, and ultimately, HSBC did nothing wrong in closing her accounts.

Miss B hasn't said this matter has caused her distress and inconvenience. But as I don't think HSBC has done anything wrong, I find there's no basis for me to make any compensation award. So I'm not going to ask HSBC to compensate Miss B for any trouble and upset this may have caused.

### **My final decision**

For the reasons above, I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss B to accept or reject my decision before 8 January 2024.

Ketan Nagla  
**Ombudsman**