

## **The complaint**

Mr S has complained about delays and misinformation given to him by Nationwide Building Society (Nationwide) at the time of maturity for his child trust fund (CTF).

## **What happened**

Mr S' CTF matured in February 2022, as he turned 18 years-old.

Prior to this, he was in contact with Nationwide (through his parents) to ascertain what information would need to be provided to ensure smooth payment upon maturity. Nationwide acknowledge that unfortunately, they didn't inform Mr S that the identification documents required, would need to be certified.

Despite receiving the necessary certified documents in April 2022, the CTF wasn't closed until September 2022. Mr S didn't finally receive the funds until 10 October 2022.

Mr S complained to Nationwide. He said the misinformation and subsequent delays had caused significant distress and inconvenience. Nationwide responded and offered a total of £275 for the impact of their errors. They also say they paid Mr S a further £40 for the cost incurred in chasing this up, such as telephone calls.

Mr S remained unhappy and brought his complaint to our service for an independent review. An investigator looked into it but didn't think Nationwide had done enough. He said that a more appropriate amount considering the impact, was £350.

Nationwide agreed to this in settlement of the complaint. However, Mr S didn't agree. He said that the amount didn't fairly compensate him for the inconvenience caused. As no agreement was reached, the case has been passed to me for 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.

Having done so, I have reached the same conclusion as the Investigator. I'll explain why.

Firstly, I would like to acknowledge how difficult and frustrating this period will have been for Mr S. I understand the impact that waiting for funds and being given such misinformation can have. I am pleased to see that Nationwide have made regular attempts to put things right and also agreed to the settlement put forward by the investigator.

I believe that the CTF should have been closed and paid to Mr S, within a month of maturity,

had the correct information been given prior. This means that in this case, I believe the errors caused up to 6 months of avoidable delays. I note that part of the delay was caused to a missing cheque which Nationwide have provided evidence that they did send, so I don't hold them responsible for this. There was also an issue with the name on the subsequent cheque not matching Mr S's bank account, but I am satisfied that is not the fault of Nationwide and they issued the cheque correctly. They also then made reasonable attempts to resolve the matter by making a direct bank transfer.

Having considered the impact this had on Mr S, I think a total of £350 compensation is reasonable in the circumstances. I note that Mr S hasn't provided any details of what he intended to or did use the funds for. I note previous comments that a property purchase was missed due to this, however I don't find that a reasonable conclusion and haven't been provided with any further evidence of it. I must also state that Mr S is the eligible consumer here and not either of his parents, so I am only considering the impact on him and any losses that he suffered personally.

In summary, I think the amount that Nationwide have agreed to pay of £350 compensation, for the impact the delays had on Mr S, is fair in the circumstances. I note that Nationwide have also said that they paid Mr S £40 separately for additional costs such as calls made to raise the complaint and chase the funds. I won't be asking Nationwide to do anything further to this.

### **My final decision**

My final decision for the reasons set out above, is that I uphold the complaint and think that Nationwide Building Society should pay Mr S £350 (less any compensation payments already made) to put things right, if they haven't already done so.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr S to accept or reject my decision before 3 November 2023.

Yoni Smith  
**Ombudsman**