



HM Treasury

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[www.gov.uk/hm-treasury](http://www.gov.uk/hm-treasury)

Jay Smith  
By email

10 May 2024

Our reference: TO2024/07544

Dear Jay Smith,

Thank you for your correspondence dated 18 April to the Economic Secretary to the Treasury. As it is not practical for ministers to respond personally to all the correspondence they receive, the Banking & Credit Team has been asked to reply.

First, it should be noted that decisions regarding sales and acquisitions are commercial decisions for banks and building societies, and it would be inappropriate for the Government to comment.

Banks and building societies in the UK are held to rigorous prudential and governance standards by the Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) and Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), which operate independently from the Government. Any material change in control of a regulated firm must be approved by the PRA to ensure that the firm will continue to be able to comply with the PRA's requirements for safety and soundness, including financial resilience, governance, and risk management.

Furthermore, any dispute arising between a building society and its customers is usually best resolved by the parties involved. If you have not done so already, we would encourage you to contact Nationwide's customer complaints department to express your dissatisfaction. The FCA's rules require firms to properly investigate all complaints and, through ongoing supervision, it continues to monitor firms' complaint handling processes.

If you are unhappy with Nationwide's final response, then you may be able to make a complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service, which exists to help settle complaints between consumers and businesses that provide financial services.

You may also be interested to know that the Current Account Switch Service (CASS) allows customers to switch their account to another bank or building society easily. The switch service is free to use, comes with a guarantee to protect customers from financial loss if something goes wrong, and redirects any payments mistakenly sent to the old account, providing further assurance for customers.

This means that customers are more able than ever to hold their bank or building society to account by voting with their feet, and that firms are incentivised to work hard to retain their existing customers and attract new ones. More information about CASS is available at:

[www.currentaccountswitch.co.uk](http://www.currentaccountswitch.co.uk).

Please be assured that the Government remains committed to ensuring the UK has a highly competitive banking sector, working in the interests of all consumers and businesses across the country. The Government is supportive of the unique role played by building societies in providing vital diversity to the UK financial services sector and, as always, it keeps the law under review.

Thank you for taking the trouble to make us aware of these concerns.

Yours sincerely,

Banking & Credit Team  
HM Treasury