

## **The complaint**

Mr and Mrs V have complained that when Mr V tried paying for items online with his Lloyds Bank Plc ("Lloyds") debit card, he is presented with a message saying that a verification code will be sent to his phone. Mr V says that no code was received and so the transactions timed out.

Mr V is unhappy with the general service he has received from Lloyds. He says he contacted Lloyds a number of times to try and get the matter rectified, but says it has not been resolved, even though Lloyds said it has been.

Mr V is also unhappy that Lloyds chose to send the verification codes to his landline rather than to his mobile.

As this matter is specifically in relation to Mr V's debit card, I have only referred to Mr V throughout this decision.

## **What happened**

After Mr V raised his complaint with Lloyds, Lloyds issued a final response letter on 22 September 2022 that explained that his debit card payment on 3 August 2022 had been blocked for a security check. Lloyds explained that as it had not been able to speak with Mr V, it'd blocked the next attempted payment on 9 and 13 August 2022. Lloyds explained that its fraud team still needed to speak with Mr V and provided him with a telephone number to call.

Lloyds apologised to Mr V for the amount of time he'd spent trying to reach its fraud team and for being passed to different departments on 13 August 2022, and so it paid Mr V £50 in recognition of the inconvenience he incurred.

After Mr V had referred his complaint to our service, one of our investigators assessed the complaint and he concluded that there was no information in the evidence that Lloyds provided, to show that it was at fault for Mr V not receiving the text messages containing the verification code. The adjudicator also didn't think Lloyds had acted unfairly or unreasonably because it tried sending the messages to Mr V's landline instead to see if that resolved matters. The investigator concluded that the £50 paid by Lloyds was reasonable redress for the difficulties Mr V experienced in trying to contact Lloyds.

The investigator also explained that Mr V will need to raise a separate complaint if he is unhappy that Lloyds' voice recognition software didn't work when he tried calling Lloyds.

Mr V disagreed with the investigator's assessment, so the matter was referred for an ombudsman's 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 see that Mr V has asked for a very detailed assessment of everything that has occurred in this complaint. Although I understand why Mr V has asked for this, I have focused on the key aspects of this complaint in this decision. But I would like to assure Mr V

that I have considered all the information he has provided. And having reviewed everything, I don't uphold this complaint. I will explain why.

Overall, I think it's clear that Mr V did experience difficulties in making a payment online with his debit card. Mr V says that he never received a verification code, and this led to his attempts to verify the payment to time out. I've no reason to doubt what Mr V says and this seems to be reflected (at least partially) in the evidence that Lloyds has provided – which indicate that the verification attempts on the 13 August 2022 were unsuccessful as they 'timed out', which is consistent with what Mr V has said.

I appreciate that such an experience is frustrating, especially as Mr V tried to make the payments a few times, yet faced the same issue each time. I can see that there has been a lot of focus on whether the verification codes were or weren't sent to Mr V. But it seems to be the case that Mr V couldn't proceed with the payment on 3 August 2022 because - as Lloyds said in its letter dated 10 September 2022 - it had placed a security block on his card. Again, I recognise that this would've been frustrating for Mr V. But equally, I can't say that Lloyds was being unreasonable by doing this. After all, its fraud prevention systems are there to detect payments that could potentially be fraudulent and therefore protect account holders from suffering a loss.

It also seems that as Lloyds had been unable to speak to Mr V about the payment, the block hadn't been lifted since 3 August 2022. So in the circumstances, it seems to be most likely the case that Mr V experienced further issues when trying to use his debit card for online payments on 13 August 2022 because of the block that had previously been applied to his account.

Mr V says that the matter with his debit card is, as far as he is aware, still ongoing. Whereas Lloyds has said that it is not aware from its system records of any remaining issue with Mr V's debit card.

Because of this, in an attempt to look into Mr V's concerns further, we asked Mr V for evidence that the issue is still unresolved - such as further unsuccessful attempts to use the debit card to pay for items online since August 2022.

However, Mr V has not provided any such evidence. On the contrary, Mr V responded by saying the investigator has never bothered to sort the problem and simply said that the problem, as far as he was aware, was still ongoing.

It is the case that our service can only go on the evidence that is available. But Mr V has not provided any evidence to show that there still is an issue when using his debit card for online payments. So in the circumstances, I can only reasonably conclude that the matter likely was a one off issue that Mr V faced in August 2022.

Lloyds has checked its records for Mr V and it says that there are no outstanding blocks or indicators for Mr V and says that there have been two payments since August 2022 – which show the payments were authenticated and successful. So based on all the evidence that is available, I'm unable to conclude that there is an outstanding issue with Mr V not receiving the verification codes for online payments when using his debit card.

I understand that Mr V is also unhappy that Lloyds tried sending the verification codes to his landline without his consent. However, I can't see that Lloyds was being unreasonable by doing this. It only did this to try and troubleshoot the problem that Mr V said he was experiencing. Attempting to send the codes to a different telephone number that it already had stored for Mr V seems like a reasonable approach to take to show that codes were being sent out. Although I understand it wasn't successful in Mr V's case, possibly because he has a nuisance call blocker on his landline.

Finally, Mr V has said that he had to contact Lloyds a number of times to resolve this matter. I recognise that it would've been frustrating for him, and he was on the phone for lengthy

periods of time. Lloyds has already paid Mr V £50 to reflect the inconvenience and frustration this matter has caused him.

When considering if this is a reasonable amount of compensation, I have to bear in mind that there is a general level of inconvenience that we all face in day-to-day life or when dealing with financial businesses or when things don't go quite as they should do – that doesn't warrant compensation. But I can see that Mr V has had long wait times when calling Lloyds and has been passed between different departments within Lloyds. I recognise that this would've been frustrating for Mr V and I think Lloyds could've handled matters better in assisting Mr V in removing the block from his card. So taking everything into account, I think that the £50 compensation paid by Lloyds fairly reflects the inconvenience that Mr V experienced. Because of this, I don't think Lloyds needs to do anything further in relation to this complaint.

### **My final decision**

Because of the reasons given above, I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs V and Mr V to accept or reject my decision before 10 November 2023.

Thomas White  
**Ombudsman**