

The complaint

Mr L complains that Cater Allen Limited has applied blocks to his account.

What happened

Mr L says his account card was blocked on 7 February 2023 which has happened previously. He says he called Cater Allen, but he wasn't helped by it. Mr L says the account card was blocked again and says the problem has caused inconvenience as well as distress. He would like an investigation into what has happened and compensation.

Cater Allen says it upheld Mr L's complaint and has apologised. It says it didn't fully remove the account block when Mr L called it on 7 February 2023. Cater Allen has offered a total of £100 compensation and says it doesn't have a record of other account issues or similar complaints.

Mr L brought his complaint to us, and our investigator thought the compensation offer appropriate. The investigator thought Cater Allen must have security measures and didn't think there any evidence of issues on other occasions.

Mr L doesn't accept that view and says he still has problems with the account.

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 come to the overall view that Cater Allen has made a fair and reasonable compensation offer.

I have no doubt Mr L appreciates that fraud is a major problem for banks and building societies and that they must have security measures in place to protect its and its customer's money. I appreciate that on occasions legitimate customers and transactions can be made subject to such security blocks. I accept that can cause inconvenience but that doesn't mean a business has made a mistake.

I have looked at Mr L's account notes and don't think Cater Allen made a mistake by initially applying the account blocks if it held security concerns. I appreciate Mr L then called Cater Allen and I have listened to the call. There is no dispute that Cater Allen didn't remove the account block on 7 February 2023 as it ought to have. And there is no doubt Mr L was caused inconvenience and distress in having further account problems as well as having to spend time on a further call.

Cater Allen accepts making a mistake and so the only real issue for me to consider is the compensation level. I have made clear that I consider the compensation offer of £100 and the apology fair and reasonable. I have not seen any evidence of financial loss caused by what took place and am satisfied the problem in this complaint was resolved within a fairly short time period. I can't consider other complaints Mr L may have or issues on other

occasions. And I have not seen any evidence from either side about dates of other problems or specific complaints being made.

I can see from Cater Allen's records that Mr L suggested he should pay £100 compensation. I appreciate Mr L hasn't told us that but think it likely he told Cater Allen that. And that is the amount that has been offered by it.

Overall, I'm satisfied Mr L was clearly caused inconvenience and distress, but the compensation offer, as well as the apology is appropriate. I hope Mr L appreciates that I can't comment on any subsequent problems as Cater Allen will need to consider any new complaints

My final decision

My final decision is that Cater Allen Limited has made a fair and reasonable compensation offer of £100. I direct Cater Allen Limited to pay that compensation if Mr L accepts this decision.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr L to accept or reject my decision before 7 December 2023.

David Singh
Ombudsman