

The complaint

Mr C complains Revolut Ltd blocked and closed his account. He also says Revolut took too long to return his money to him. He says this caused him trouble and upset because he couldn't pay for important medical appointments. He wants Revolut to compensate him for the impact this had on him.

What happened

Mr C had an account with Revolut.

On 16 April 2020, Revolut blocked Mr C's account and told him it needed to speak to him about how he was operating his account.

Mr C provided Revolut with information about the payments made into his account. This included paperwork relating to two pensions and information about his business. He also told Revolut that he had been unwell with a serious health condition and needed the money in his account released quickly so that he could make important weekly medical appointments, which he had to pay for upfront.

Revolut released Mr C's funds on 25 June 2020. And told him that it was closing his account immediately. Revolut apologised for how long it had taken to complete its review and close Mr C's account. It explained this had been caused by a backlog of work and offered Mr C £100 compensation for any trouble and upset he'd been caused.

Mr C didn't accept Revolut's offer. He said that he'd been a good customer of the bank and had always maintained his account properly. He said because his account was blocked, he wasn't able to pay for important medical appointments and he struggled to pay for everyday living expenses, which together had had an impact on his health. He also said Revolut hadn't kept him informed about what it was doing and didn't respond to his messages. He said the £100 compensation Revolut offered wasn't enough to reflect the amount of trouble and upset he'd been caused. So, he brought his complaint to our service where one of our investigator's looked into things.

The investigator asked Mr C for some more information about his health and medical appointments. Mr C gave us a hospital report which showed he had been diagnosed with a serious illness in 2019. But he wasn't able to provide anything to show that he was required to attend weekly medical appointments.

The investigator didn't think Revolut had done anything wrong when it had blocked and decided to close Mr C's account. But she said the bank could have released Mr C's funds sooner as it had completed what it was doing by 19 May 2020. The investigator also thought Revolut should've provided Mr C with better service and responded to his messages when he had contacted the bank to try and find out what was happening with his account, especially as Mr C had told Revolut he wasn't in the best of health. So, she said Revolut

should do more to put things right and pay Mr C £250 compensation for the trouble and upset he'd suffered along with interest for loss of use of the money in his account.

Mr C disagreed. He wants more compensation. Revolut agreed but wanted some clarity regarding the time period it was being asked to pay interest. As no agreement has been reached the case has come 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 come to the same findings and conclusions as the investigator. I know this will be a disappointment to Mr C. So, I'll explain why.

Revolut has already accepted it should have provided Mr C with better service when it blocked and closed Mr C's account. The bank has explained that this was caused by a back log of work. There's no dispute between the parties as to the events that have taken place. So, I need not repeat them here. In this decision, what I need to decide is whether the current offer of compensation is fair and reasonable to settle this complaint. I also must keep in mind the level of awards we'd generally make for broadly similar situations.

Firstly, I'm sorry to hear that Mr C has been unwell and I can appreciate things have been very difficult for him and his family since his diagnosis. I hope his health improves in the future.

Mr C has provided us with hospital reports about his health, which show he was diagnosed with a serious medical condition in early 2019. Mr C has told us that as part of his treatment he needs to attend weekly medical appointments to avoid a health relapse. But says he had to delay these appointments because Revolut took too long to release his funds. This along with Revolut's failure to respond to his messages about what was happening with his account caused him a great deal of stress and inconvenience.

The investigator asked Mr C to provide evidence to show he had to cancel medical appointments. But Mr C hasn't provided this information. He's explained that he wasn't actually able to make the appointments as they needed to be paid for in advance. And he needed the money in his Revolut account to do so. Whilst I accept what Mr C says about the arrangements for making his appointments, I would have expected Mr C to be able to provide evidence to show he was *required* to attend weekly appointments, such as a treatment plan, and that he had been attending weekly appointments up to the point his account had been blocked. But he hasn't been able to do this. So, I'm not satisfied Revolut's delays prevented Mr C making medical appointments.

But I do think he's been caused unnecessary distress and inconvenience. I say this because I can see that Revolut finished what it was doing on 19 May 2020. So, it should have released Mr C's money to him. But Mr C had to wait until 25 June 2020 – some 6 weeks later, to get access to his funds. Revolut has explained that it was dealing with a backlog of work, which caused the delay. I don't think it's unreasonable for a backlog to lead to a few weeks delay. But I do think Revolut could've released Mr C's funds sooner. And given Mr C's health issues, I can see how a delay of six weeks was more significant to him.

I can also see from looking at Revolut's contact notes that the bank stopped responding to Mr C's app messages on 22 April 2020, which meant Mr C had to go to the trouble of sending further messages. It's clear from looking at Mr C's messages he became very

frustrated at the lack of service he received. Revolut hasn't explained why it didn't acknowledge Mr C's messages. But I think it's unlikely Mr C would have repeatedly sent messages if the bank had responded to him. So, I think Revolut could have provided Mr C with better service.

In summary, I've no doubt Mr C has had an upsetting and frustrating time. And I'm satisfied that he was put to some trouble and upset having to repeatedly contact Revolut and wait six weeks for his funds to be released. But I share the investigator's assessment and think £250 compensation is fair, and reasonable. And that Revolut should pay 8% interest on Mr C's account balance of £660.66 from 19 May 2020 until 25 June 2020, when the funds were released to Mr C. So, I won't be asking Revolut to do anything more.

My final decision

My final decision is that I uphold Mr C's complaint. Revolut Ltd should pay Mr C £250 for the delay in releasing his funds and poor service, plus 8% simple on the closing balance of Mr C's account, £660.66 from 19 May 2020 until 25 June 2020.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr C to accept or reject my decision before 19 October 2020.

Sharon Kerrison
Ombudsman