

## **The complaint**

Mr B complains that Revolut Ltd blocked his account. He's also unhappy about the overall level of service he received from Revolut. He says this caused him trouble and upset and he wants Revolut to pay him compensation.

## **What happened**

Mr B had a 'Metal' account with Revolut. This account came with additional benefits such as trading functions, as well as offering a premium level of customer service. The subscription fee for the account was £12.99 per month.

In September 2019, Revolut blocked Mr B's account, while it carried out a review. At the time the account balance was just over £520. Mr B complained. He said he needed the money in his account as he was on holiday and needed to fund his trip. Mr B asked Revolut several times when it would unblock his account. Revolut said that it couldn't give him a timeframe as to when the review would be completed asked Mr B to provide some information about his account.

Revolut unblocked Mr B's account in April 2020. It apologised to Mr B for how long it had taken to complete the review and offered him £150 compensation for any trouble and upset he'd suffered. Mr B didn't accept the offer. He explained that because he didn't have access to his account whilst he was on holiday, he had to use his credit card and incur extra fees, he'd lost out on several months of account subscription and he'd suffered a great deal of anxiety and stress because he couldn't access funds in his account. So, he said Revolut should pay him around £10,000 compensation.

An investigator looked at Mr B's complaint. He said Revolut were entitled to block Mr B's account and did so to comply with its legal and regulatory obligations. But he thought Revolut could have completed its review quicker and recognised the impact this had on Mr B. He said that Revolut's offer of £150 compensation was fair. Mr B disagreed. He says £150 doesn't adequately reflect the amount of trouble and upset he suffered. And he wants Revolut to provide an explanation for why it blocked his account and refund him his account subscription fees.

As no agreement could be reached the matter 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.

Firstly, the investigator was right to point out that Revolut has important legal and regulatory obligations it must meet when providing accounts to customers. These obligations are ongoing, so do not only pertain to when an account is opened. To comply with its obligations Revolut may need to review an account and/or restrict its customer's access. If Revolut didn't comply with its obligations it could risk serious sanction.

Having looked at all the evidence, I'm satisfied Revolut acted in accordance with its obligations when it blocked and reviewed Mr B's account. And it was entitled to do so under the account terms and conditions.

The timing of Revolut's actions was unfortunate. Mr B was on holiday when he discovered his account had been blocked. He was relying on the money in his account to be able to meet the cost of his holiday expenses. So, I can understand why he found this experience with Revolut stressful and upsetting. But as I've already explained financial businesses have a legal obligation to comply with various laws and regulations. I've seen the evidence provided by Revolut and I can see that in blocking the account Revolut were following an internal process which they carried out in order to comply with their legal and regulatory obligations. This was a legitimate exercise. So, it wouldn't be appropriate to make an award of compensation for that, since I don't believe Revolut acted inappropriately and treated Mr B unfairly in taking the actions it did.

Mr B wants Revolut to explain why it didn't let him know it had blocked his account and why it blocked his account. I can appreciate not being able to access his account would've caused Mr B worry and concern. But Revolut doesn't disclose to its customers what triggers a review of their accounts. So, I can't say it's done anything wrong by not giving Mr B this information. And it wouldn't be appropriate for me to require it do so.

Mr B has said that due to the block he hasn't had the benefits of the metal subscription. And he wants the fees he's paid refunded. He's also pointed out that he brought a number of customers to Revolut. Whilst I can appreciate Mr B feels aggrieved, he's referred people to Revolut, I've checked Mr B's statements and can't see that Mr B has paid the monthly fee of £12.99 for the account. The investigator also confirmed with Revolut that the account was provided to Mr B free. So, I can't say Mr B has lost out financially because Revolut blocked his account.

Turning to the issue of the amount of time Mr B's account was restricted. Mr B's account was blocked for just shy of seven months. This is a considerable length of time and I can see from the in app chat that Mr B chased Revolut repeatedly to unblock his account, which would have been time consuming and no doubt frustrating. So, I'm satisfied that Mr B was caused some trouble and upset and I do think Revolut could've provided better service to him.

Revolut has accepted it took too long to complete its review and offered Mr B £150 compensation. I understand that Mr B wants more compensation. But I think £150 is fair. We can't award compensation to punish financial businesses. Its often a modest amount. In this case, £150 is more than a token amount and acknowledges that Revolut could have done things better here. So, I'm not going to ask Revolut to do anything more.

### **My final decision**

For the reasons I've explained, I'm not going to ask Revolut Ltd to do anything more to resolve Mr B's complaint. If Revolut hasn't paid Mr B the £150 it offered, it should do so.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr B to accept or reject my decision before 18 May 2021.

Sharon Kerrison

**Ombudsman**