

## **The complaint**

Mr C complains about the way that HSBC UK Bank Plc dealt with a query about a payment showing on his account that he said had been cancelled.

## **What happened**

Mr C bought an item using his bank card for £1,619 on 7 November 2020. He found out that the retailer cancelled the purchase but could see that the payment was still showing on his account. He is unhappy that when he first contacted HSBC it gave him incorrect information about what to do. And he wants to be compensated for his distress and financial loss.

HSBC accepted that when Mr C first got in contact, its agent didn't identify that the payment was a pending one. And so, it sent him a link to raise a dispute. But Mr C called back, and it then gave him the correct information which was that this was a pending payment and couldn't be removed. It paid him £50 in compensation. It didn't accept his claim that it should pay him at least £400 due to a lost business opportunity.

Our investigator didn't recommend that HSBC do anything more. HSBC had sent the link to Mr C at 14:33 that day. And it logged his further call at 15:01 when he was given the correct information. HSBC had apologised and paid compensation. Mr C had explained that he had entered a gaming tournament that weekend paying a registration fee of £400 and with a potential prize of £5,000. But it wasn't reasonable to expect HSBC to compensate him for the amount of the registration fee as he wanted.

Mr C didn't agree and wanted his complaint to be reviewed. He didn't think it had been properly looked into and he isn't now asking for £5,000 but compensation reflecting the negligence of HSBC. He has asked for the £400 fee as he couldn't participate in the tournament.

## **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've listened to a recording of the later call Mr C had with HSBC on 7 November 2020. He clearly wasn't happy that the payment was showing on his account. And he wanted it to be removed then which he said a different bank had done for him in the past. The person he spoke to explained that this couldn't be done as it was pending having been authorised for the merchant involved to collect. He was told that if as he said the purchase had been cancelled then the amount wouldn't be collected but it could remain as pending for up to seven days.

The information provided by HSBC is that the authorisation for the payment was taken at 13:29 that day and Mr C contacted HSBC through live chat at 13:55 and spoke to an agent at 14:33. His call with the other agent I've described started at 15:01. So, the period when he had incorrect information was about half an hour and it is clear he wasn't satisfied with what he had been told, even when he'd been given the correct information.

I'm not looking here at what the retailer involved did and why the purchase was cancelled after the authorisation had been taken. But HSBC's error was in wrongly thinking at first that this was a payment that had actually been debited - rather than a pending one. Mr C ought to have been given the correct information that first time.

Mr C in his complaint form described being in a gaming tournament that weekend and being at an event that was *'planned for months, and due to being absent from there, the distress alone was something which I am extremely angry and frustrated about'* and that this lasted all day. He also stated, *'I am hopeful that I would be reimbursed £5,000 as I would have received this as a prize if I was able to attend and take part.'*

I know I'm going to disappoint Mr C when I say that I don't think that HSBC is responsible for him not participating in the tournament or any financial loss. He clearly was able to be involved in a purchase that day. HSBC wasn't responsible for the pending payment. It was his choice to follow this up with HSBC at a time when he says he could have been winning an amount of money far in excess of the value of his purchase. I would reasonably have expected him to act to mitigate any loss. And this potential loss was something that HSBC had no knowledge of at the time. HSBC did cause him some inconvenience over what to me seems to be about half an hour. I think that its response is proportionate to reflect what happened having considered all the evidence and what Mr C has said.

### **My final decision**

My decision is that I do not uphold this complaint in the sense that HSBC UK Bank Plc need not do anything more.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr C to accept or reject my decision before 2 December 2021.

Michael Crewe  
**Ombudsman**