

The complaint

Mr K complains that The Co-operative Bank Plc (Co-op) cancelled his debit card without notifying him. Mr K also complains about how long it took to receive a replacement debit card and the level of inconvenience caused.

What happened

The background to this complaint and my initial conclusions were set out in my provisional decision. I said:

Mr K contacted Co-op on 15 July 2021 after noticing an unrecognised transaction on his bank statements. The call handler went on to cancel Mr K's debit card but didn't tell him during the call.

Mr K called Co-op back the next day and asked why his card had been blocked. The call handler explained the card was blocked as Mr K had raised concerns about a transaction and that he should've been notified at the time. The call handler said a new card would be issued but that Mr K wouldn't receive it before the weekend. Mr K explained he needed his debit card to collect family members. Mr K confirmed one of his family members is disabled and that it was important he had access to funds.

The call handler attempted to retrieve Mr K's call from the day before but was unable to do so due to systems issues. Co-op says that as the call handler was unable to retrieve the call recording from the day before, it wasn't able to confirm whether a mistake had been made. As a result, Mr K's replacement debit card wasn't expedited as a priority.

Mr K says Co-op failed to call him back. But Co-op says it attempted to get back in touch with Mr K later on 16 July 2021 and again on 20 July 2021.

On 22 July 2021 Mr K spoke with Co-op again and advised no call backs had been received. Mr K explained that he was without access to funds over the weekend so had to transfer funds to a friend who withdrew cash on his behalf. Mr K also explained he had to arrange for someone to collect him from work at a cost and that his family routine had been impacted.

Co-op sent Mr K a final response on 29 July 2021 and agreed it had failed to tell him his debit card had been cancelled when he called on 15 July 2021. Co-op offered Mr K £125 to apologise. Co-op said it had tried to call him back on 16 July 2020 and a few days later.

An investigator at this service looked at Mr K's complaint but thought Co-op had dealt with it fairly. Mr K asked to appeal and said he didn't think Co-op had offered a fair level of compensation for the issues raised. As Mr K asked to appeal, his complaint has been passed to me to make a decision.

What I've provisionally 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.

Co-op accepts the call handler Mr K spoke with on 15 July 2021 didn't handle his enquires properly. Mr K called to query a transaction and the call handler cancelled his debit card without notifying him. The call handler should've told Mr K his debit card would be blocked and I'm satisfied failing to do so has caused Mr K unnecessary distress and inconvenience.

I've listened to Mr K's call with Co-op on 16 July 2021. In my view, the call handler appeared more concerned with checking whether his colleague had made a mistake the day before than he was in resolving Mr K's issue. The majority of the call was spent with the call handler trying to access a call recording from the day before. But despite being told Mr K needed access to funds over the weekend to support his family, one of whom has a disability, they didn't discuss how new cards were ordered or whether a replacement could've been sent as a priority.

If the call handler was unable to verify Mr K's version of events, I think the fairest approach would've been to take his word and arrange for a card to be provided as a priority. Co-op's final response confirms the call handler would most likely have taken that step if they'd been able to listen to the call from 15 July 2021. I'm not persuaded that it was fair to limit the assistance offered to Mr K on the basis that the call handler was unable to retrieve a recording from the day before.

The call handler said he would call Mr K back later that day. Mr K has told us he didn't receive the calls, but Co-op has provided call recordings. And the call recordings show it did call Mr K back as claimed.

Mr K has told us the way his card was cancelled without notice and the delay in receiving a replacement caused him a considerable level of distress and inconvenience. I understand Co-op offered Mr K £125 to resolve his complaint but I'm not persuaded that's reasonable. I think a figure of £250 more fairly reflects the impact of the above issues on Mr K and the level of distress and inconvenience caused and is a fairer way to resolve Mr K's complaint. Based on the information I've seen so far, I intend to uphold Mr K's complaint and increase the compensation awarded from £125 to £250.

I invited both parties to respond with any additional comments they wanted me to consider before I made my final decision. Mr K confirmed he had nothing further to add. Co-op said it accepted the provisional 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.

As neither party has provided new information for me to consider, I see no reason to change the conclusions I reached in my provisional decision. I still think Mr K's complaint should be upheld, for the same reasons.

My final decision

My decision is that I uphold Mr K's complaint and direct the Co-operative Bank Plc to pay him a total of £250 (less any compensation already paid).

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr K to accept or

reject my decision before 29 July 2022.

Marco Manente
Ombudsman