

## **The complaint**

Mr R complains Creation Consumer Finance Limited (Creation) unfairly blocked his credit card account while on holiday, because he refused to answer unreasonable security questions.

## **What happened**

Mr R says while on holiday overseas, in late April 2022 he attempted an online purchase using his credit card, but the transaction was blocked by Creation. Mr R says he then rang Creation for the block to be removed and answered various security questions, but he refused to answer further questions of a personal nature. Creation then refused to unblock the credit card account, until he spoke to its fraud department. Mr R says he couldn't speak to the fraud department that day as it was closed, so he had to call them the following day after the bank holiday before Creation agreed to unblock his credit card account.

Mr R didn't feel it was appropriate for Creation to ask personal questions about other members of his household as part of its security checks and is looking for it to pay him £100 for the inconvenience it has caused him.

Creation says it acted within its process and procedures when asking Mr R the security questions it did, to unblock the credit card account. Creation says the credit card was unblocked when he spoke to the fraud team after the bank holiday, a few days later.

Mr R wasn't happy with Creation's response and referred the matter to this service.

The investigator looked at all the available information but didn't uphold the complaint. The investigator felt Creation had acted reasonably when it asked Mr R the security questions it did, to prevent a potential fraud on the credit card account. The investigator says if Mr R had answered the questions, his credit card account would have been unblocked at that time. The investigator didn't feel Creation had done anything wrong.

Mr R didn't agree with the investigator's view and asked for the matter to be referred to an ombudsman for a final 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.

Having done so, I won't be upholding this complaint and I will explain how I have come to my decision.

I can understand it would have been frustrating for Mr R while overseas on holiday, to have an online credit card transaction declined and then to be asked, what he felt were unreasonable personal questions before the card was unblocked.

When looking at this complaint I will consider if Creation acted unreasonably when it asked Mr R a series of security questions before it would agree to unblock his credit card account.

What happened here is Mr R attempted an online credit card purchase while overseas on holiday and it was blocked by Creation. Mr R is unhappy that Creation refused to remove the block on his credit card unless he answered what he felt were intrusive questions about other household members. Mr R is also unhappy that he had to wait until a day after the bank holiday before his credit card was finally unblocked.

While I understand the points Mr R has made I'm not fully persuaded by his argument.

I say this because while Mr R may not agree, it's not for this service to tell Creation what the nature of the security questions should be – if Mr R is unhappy with the security questions posed by Creation, then that would potentially be something for the Information Commissioner's Office to consider.

What I would say is Creation asked Mr R questions in line with its standard process and procedures here and it's not for me to say it can't. It's worth saying these practices are carried out to protect both businesses and consumers alike and it's not unreasonable for Creation to need to be fully satisfied as to the identity of the caller, in circumstances like this.

While Mr R wasn't happy that he had to wait a further day before his credit card was unblocked, I am satisfied this delay was unavoidable given unfortunately, this happened over a bank holiday weekend. It's fair to say the delay only happened here as Mr R refused to answer the security questions when asked.

With that in mind I can't say Creation have done anything wrong here. While Mr R will be disappointed with my decision, I am satisfied this is a fair outcome.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr R to accept or reject my decision before 28 December 2022.

Barry White  
**Ombudsman**