

## **The complaint**

Mr P complains American Express Services Europe Limited (Amex) incorrectly cancelled the wrong credit card causing him problems while overseas.

## **What happened**

Mr P says he had planned a bachelor party for him and his friends in Las Vegas and before he took the trip he called Amex to enquire of the whereabouts of a new credit card he had requested. Mr P says he realised the new card wouldn't arrive in time for his proposed trip, so he asked Amex to cancel that card. Mr P says Amex, unaware to him rather than cancelling his newly ordered card, in fact cancelled his long-held credit card instead.

Mr P says when he arrived at the hotel his existing credit card was rejected and on speaking to Amex it became clear it had cancelled the wrong credit card. Mr P says Amex didn't offer any solutions other than he log a complaint and initially said it wasn't clear what credit card he wanted to cancel. Mr P says he was left having to borrow funds from his family and ask his friends to contribute to the hotel costs, which he was supposed to be paying for as the host.

Mr P says the mistakes made by Amex caused him huge embarrassment and ruined what was supposed to be a once in a lifetime visit for him and his friends. Mr P says he has lost out on credit card points he would have spent using the card, and given the upset and distress this has caused him, he would expect Amex to pay him significantly more than the £175 it has paid him for the inconvenience.

Amex have accepted it made a mistake and were at fault for cancelling the wrong credit card and says it paid Mr P £175 by way of compensation for that.

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

The investigator looked at all the available information and upheld Mr P's complaint. The investigator noted although Mr P managed to fulfil his holiday, he had experienced significant distress and felt Amex should increase its award to £750, to fairly reflect the trouble and upset Mr P had experienced over this matter.

Mr P didn't agree with the Investigator's view on the level of compensation to be awarded 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 will also be upholding Mr P's complaint and I will explain how I have come to my decision.

I can understand it would have been distressing and frustrating for Mr P to have planned a special trip like this, only to be let down by Amex when it cancelled the wrong credit card

which he intended to use to pay for the trip.

The first thing to say here is Amex have accepted it made a mistake, apologised for that and paid Mr P some compensation.

The course of events here are well documented and understood by both parties, so I won't go over the same ground covered at length by the investigator here. Where Mr P has an issue, is with the level of compensation offered initially by Amex and by the investigator.

There's no question Amex could have dealt with matters better at the time and I take the view its support team could have done more to assist Mr P. Mr P had explained to Amex the difficult position he was in, due to its mistake but initially Amex seemed to suggest there was some confusion over what card Mr P wanted cancelled, rather than dealing with the problem at hand. It has since accepted it was for them to have understood more clearly what credit card Mr P wanted cancelled, and it didn't do that.

I can see that this has caused Mr P not only a great deal of inconvenience and embarrassment, it would have tainted what was a long-planned trip for him and his friends. I understand Mr P strongly feels the compensation he has been awarded by Amex and the amount proposed by the investigator falls short of his expectations. It's worth saying it's not the role of this service to penalise businesses when mistakes like this happen but to see it apologises and takes steps to offer a suitable level of redress. But here Amex haven't addressed the level of redress in the way I would expect here.

The investigator has proposed Amex pay Mr P a total of £750 by way of compensation reflecting the fact the inconvenience didn't last for a prolonged period of time, as Mr P was still able to enjoy his planned trip. So, without trying to minimise the frustration and upset Mr P would have undoubtedly experienced, I am satisfied the level of compensation proposed by the investigator, at the higher end of what this service normally recommends, is fair given the overall circumstances here. After all Mr P was still able to fulfil his trip.

While Mr P will be disappointed with my decision, I am satisfied this is a fair outcome here.

### **Putting things right**

I instruct American Express Services Europe Limited to pay Mr P a further £575 in addition to the £175 it has already paid him, making a total of £750 by way of compensation.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that I uphold this complaint.

I instruct American Express Services Europe Limited to pay Mr P a further £575 in addition to the £175 it has already paid him, making a total of £750 by way of compensation.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr P to accept or reject my decision before 26 December 2022.

Barry White  
**Ombudsman**