

The complaint

Mr D complains that he was unable to use his debit card, linked to an account he and Miss A hold with Barclays Bank UK PLC, to withdraw money from an ATM.

As Mr D has provided most of the commentary in relation to this complaint, I will refer to him throughout.

What happened

In June 2022, Mr D invited some friends out for a meal at a restaurant. When he tried to pay, he was told that the restaurant didn't accept card payments and he would need to pay by cash. Mr D said he went to a nearby ATM to try and withdraw money using both a new card he'd been sent, and an older card when that didn't work. But the ATM had a message displayed explaining that Mr D had exceeded his daily cash withdrawal limit, so he couldn't withdraw any money. Mr D was unhappy about this, as he hadn't withdrawn cash at all. He said he then went back to the restaurant to ask if he could use another method of payment. Mr D says the restaurant then allowed him to pay using his card.

Mr D says he tried to withdraw money from an ATM again the next day, but this was also unsuccessful, and the same message was displayed. He called Barclays and was told by an adviser that this was because the limit for cash withdrawals had been set to zero. As I understand it, Mr D says he was also told the limit for contactless payments was also set to zero. Mr D says the adviser ultimately reset his cash withdrawal limit to £500. And, as I understand it, the limit for contactless payments was reset to £100. Mr D remained unhappy and said he hadn't been made aware that the limit for cash withdrawals was zero. He pointed out that this was the second time this had happened within a few months. He also said the matter caused him a great deal of embarrassment, given that the payment was for a meal which he'd invited guests to.

Barclays reviewed matters. As part of the response, it explained that Mr D's withdrawal limit was set to zero which was why he was unable to withdraw money. Barclays said the limit had since been reset to £500.

Mr D brought his complaint to this service. He said the adviser who dealt with his complaint with was rude to him and called him at a time that he had asked her not to. Mr D said he was preparing for a very important call at that time and Barclays' call caused him distress. Mr D was also unhappy that the adviser who dealt with his complaint said there was no evidence of Mr D's attempted cash withdrawals, which he thought was questioning the validity of what he said had happened.

One of our investigators reviewed matters. She noted that the same issue had occurred some months previously in March 2022, for which Barclays had paid £50 compensation. In relation to the issue in June 2022, she thought Barclays' actions had caused Mr D inconvenience. She recommended that it paid him an additional £50 compensation. Barclays accepted this recommendation, but Mr D didn't, and mostly repeated his earlier points.

Our investigator reviewed matters again and concluded that £100 total compensation was fair for all the issues which occurred. She further explained that the recommendation was for Barclays to award a further £50, in addition to the £50 Mr D had already received. Mr D accepted this, and Barclays paid him an additional £50 in line with our investigator's recommendation.

There was a misunderstanding about how much compensation was being recommended and Mr D explained he thought our investigator recommended £100 but he only received £50. Our investigator explained she thought £50 for the second issue which happened was fair and that Barclays had made payment in line with her recommendation. But Mr D disagreed and asked for an ombudsman's decision. So, the case has been passed to me to review afresh.

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.

Although a number of issues have been raised, this decision only addresses those issues I consider to be materially relevant to the crux of the complaint. However, I've given careful consideration to all of the submissions made to date.

It's certainly arguable whether it's appropriate to consider the merits of this complaint, or whether I ought to dismiss this under the powers afforded to me under the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) Dispute Resolution (DISP) Rules – DISP 3.3.4 in particular. I say this because the parties have agreed a settlement and I think the investigator's view made it clear what settlement was being accepted. The investigator explained that the total recommendation comprised of £50 compensation which was already paid – for the issue in March, which I'm not looking at in this decision – and £50 compensation which was being recommended for the subsequent issue. But, in any event, I think the £50 compensation recommended for the issue that happened in June is fair. I'll explain why.

I've considered that Barclays explained that the reason Mr D was unable to withdraw money was because his withdrawal limit was set to zero. However, in its submissions to this service, Barclays hasn't explained why this was the case and how this occurred. Instead, Barclays said that a limit can either be set through its internal systems, or by the customer themselves.

Mr D said he wasn't aware that he could change the card payment and withdrawal limits himself using his mobile banking application. He has also been consistent when explaining that he was shocked to learn that the limits had been set to zero. I've also considered that the same issue happened some months earlier due to an error Barclays apologised for. And, in submissions to this service, Barclays outlined that it had previously not reviewed matters thoroughly enough when the issue first occurred in March 2022. So, on balance, and based on the submissions before me, I'm more persuaded that the what happened in June was also likely due to an error made by Barclays.

Mr D is clear about how the matter affected him. Amongst other points, he says the situation caused him a great deal of embarrassment. I appreciate this would've been especially frustrating for Mr D, given that this was the second time the issue had happened within a few months. Mr D also explained that the adviser who dealt with his complaint called at a time that was inconvenient for him, despite him asking for this not to happen. And I acknowledge this caused Mr D distress because he was preparing for an important call. Having reviewed Mr D's testimony, and the contact notes from Barclays, it seems there was a breakdown in

communication when the call did take place. And, overall, I think the service could have been better.

I've thought very carefully about all the circumstances here. And, whilst I don't doubt the matter would have been embarrassing and inconvenient for Mr D, I'm satisfied that Barclays took steps to rectify the problem as soon as it was made aware of it. Mr D said he spoke to an adviser after the second issue occurred, and he says they were able to reset his cash withdrawal limit to £500 during the call. As I understand it, the limit for contactless payments was also reset to £100 on the call. So, I think the matter was resolved reasonably quickly. So, overall, having considered the impact of the matter on Mr D, and the overall service offered, I agree that £50 compensation is a fair way to put things right.

Barclays has already paid Mr D this compensation. So, it follows that I don't direct it to do anything further.

My final decision

For the reasons I've outlined, Barclays Bank UK PLC doesn't need to do anything further to resolve this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr D and Miss A to accept or reject my decision before 21 November 2022.

Hana Yousef
Ombudsman