

The complaint

Miss P complains that Think Money Limited blocked two payments she tried to make from her account in September 2022 and wasn't called back when she raised questions about her account.

What happened

Miss P had an account with Think Money. The product included a bills account, which incomes, direct debits and faster payments were sent to and from, and a pre-paid debit card account which could be used for general spending.

On 14 September 2021, Miss P tried to make an outbound payment of £255. On 15 September, Miss P tried to make a further payment of £65. But Think Money said that its compliance procedures and security and risk checks meant that it couldn't make these payments. It then carried out a review and on 14 October 2021 decided to close Miss P's account. The closure took place on 26 October. Think Money then sent Miss P the remaining funds.

Dissatisfied, Miss P complained to Think Money. Think Money looked at this and didn't think it had made a mistake. But it accepted it could have completed its review slightly quicker. It also accepted that Miss P had needed to wait a long time when calling them to find out what was happening. It offered £30 to compensate Miss P for the trouble and upset it caused.

I issued my provisional findings on this complaint on 15 February 2023. In my provisional decision I said:

"Financial businesses like Think Money are subject to a number of legal and regulatory requirements. This means that Think Money needs to monitor transactions into and out of an account and may need to review payments at any time. Where it does this it doesn't need to give reasons.

"Here, Think Money blocked payments into Miss P's account and carried out a review. It then closed Miss P's account. Based on what I've seen, I'm satisfied that Think Money was acting in line with its legal and regulatory obligations when it blocked and reviewed the payments out of Miss P's account.

"Think Money then carried out its review. I'd expect Think Money to carry out its review in a timely manner – and here, Think Money accepts that it could have completed things faster than it did. It also accepts that Miss B had to wait a while when she called to find out what was happening. I note Miss B says she was also given confusing information about the balance left on the account.

"Finally, Think Money decided to close the account. The terms and conditions allowed Think Money to close this account in certain circumstances. Here, Think Money gave Miss B just over a week to make alternative arrangements. Based on what I've seen, I'm satisfied that Think Money acted in line with the applicable terms and conditions when it closed the account.

“I’ve therefore considered what Think Money needs to do to put things right. I accept that Think Money acted in line with its legal and regulatory obligations, and the terms and conditions of the account, when it reviewed these payments. So while I accept that this would have been inconvenient to Miss P, that’s not something I will award compensation for.

But Think Money agrees it could have reviewed things quicker, and that Miss P had to wait a while when she called to find out what was happening.

Where I make awards for distress or inconvenience, this isn’t to punish the business but to reflect the impact its actions had on the complainant. I acknowledge that Think Money blocked two payments. But it appears Miss P otherwise had access to her account during this period – she received a large number of other payments into the account, and appears to otherwise have been able to use the card account for her normal spending. For much of this period, Miss P’s balance was considerably greater than the value of the funds that were blocked - and Miss P has also told us she was able to borrow funds to make the payments that were blocked, and was able to pay that back again once she’d got the money back. I further note that we’ve asked Miss P whether this Think Money account was her main account, what she was using the account for and for details of her employment or source of income around this time, but she hasn’t answered this.

“With all this in mind, I’m not persuaded to award more than the £30 already offered by Think Money. I understand this was issued to Miss P by cheque which she says hasn’t been paid, so Think Money may need to reissue this. Otherwise I’m not minded to make a further award.

I said that I’d consider any further comments I got by 1 March 2023.

Think Money have replied to say they’re willing to reissue the cheque to Miss P. Miss P hasn’t sent me anything further to consider. I’ve therefore reviewed the complaint 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.

Miss P hasn’t sent me anything further to consider. Think Money has confirmed that it will reissue its cheque to Miss P. I therefore reach the same conclusions for the same reasons.

My final decision

For the reasons above, my final decision is that Think Money Limited’s offer of £30 is fair. As the original cheque has expired it should now reissue this to Miss P. I make no further award.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I’m required to ask Miss P to accept or reject my decision before 31 March 2023.

Rebecca Hardman
Ombudsman