

The complaint

Mrs S has complained that Clydesdale Bank Plc ("Virgin Money") stopped a payment on her debit card.

Mrs S says that her card being declined caused her embarrassment.

What happened

One of our adjudicators assessed the complaint and they didn't think that Virgin Money had acted unfairly or unreasonably, so they did not uphold the complaint.

Mrs S disagreed with the adjudicators assessment, so the matter was referred for an ombudsman's 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 looked through everything, I can see that when Virgin Money stopped Mrs S's payment, this caused her some frustration. I say this especially as when she called up Virgin Money to get the payment released but a voicemail message was left for her (whilst she was on the phone to Virgin Money at the time) containing the payment authorisation code. This led to Mrs S having to hang up to listen to the voicemail and then call Virgin Money back with the relevant code.

However, Virgin Money has explained why some transactions may be stopped by its fraud detection system – amongst other things this includes where payments are made to a new payee and payments are made from a new device.

I note that Mrs S demanded to know the exact reason why her payment was stopped. But I don't think Virgin Money was being unreasonable for not disclosing the exact reasons why the payment may've been stopped. This is because making information about how its systems operate public could allow fraudsters to circumvent the system. Nevertheless, such systems are in place to protect the account holder from fraudulent transactions taking place on their account. Therefore, although I recognise that the matter was clearly frustrating for Mrs S, I can't reasonably say that Virgin Money treated Mrs S unfairly or unreasonably because it stopped the payment.

I note that Mrs S is also unhappy with how Virgin Money dealt with the matter, and her complaint. However, although things may not have gone as smoothly as they should've, I think that Virgin Money's offer to pay £60 fairly reflects the inconvenience caused to Mrs S by this matter. So I don't think any further award is warranted.

Putting things right

Virgin Money should pay Mrs S £60 for the distress and inconvenience that this matter caused, if it has not done so already, to put matters right.

My final decision

Because of the reasons given above, I don't think Clydesdale Bank Plc trading as "Virgin Money" needs to do anything more than what it has already offered to do – as outlined above - to put matters right.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs S to accept or reject my decision before 16 March 2023.

Thomas White
Ombudsman