

The complaint

Miss D complains that Barclays Bank Plc declined her credit card and provided conflicting advice about the balance.

What happened

Miss D holds a business credit account and a business credit card with Barclays. The credit card was linked to the business account mobile banking app. Miss D used the app to transfer sums from her business account to pay the credit card. In December 2022 Miss D tried to use the card but the transaction was declined.

Miss D contacted Barclays to find out why the card had been declined. She received conflicting information from Barclays agents. Miss D complained to Barclays, but the complaint wasn't resolved in the way she wanted so she complained to this service.

Our investigator upheld the complaint. She said that Barclays had provided unclear and conflicting information and poor customer service. The investigator said that Barclays should pay compensation of £150 to Miss D.

Miss D didn't agree and asked for her complaint to be considered by an ombudsman.

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.

I've listened to the calls that took place between Miss D and Barclays. There were several calls, each with different agents. Some agents told Miss D that she didn't owe any money on the credit card account. Others told Miss D that she owed around £3800. Miss D was also advised that the mobile app she was using only showed limited information about the balance. On one occasion, when Miss D called telephone banking, the agent gave her a different balance to that which was showing on the mobile app.

I can see how Miss D found the conflicting information confusing and frustrating. The agents weren't able to provide clear information about the account balance, which was poor customer service.

I think Barclays should've done more to explain how the mobile app worked at the time when Miss D started using it. No-one ever explained to Miss D that the app didn't show the total balance outstanding on the account. So although Miss D was making payments to clear what she thought was the balance, the balance was actually higher, which led to Miss D inadvertently building up a significant balance.

When Miss D queried the balance with the agents, some of the agents appeared to find the situation confusing and on one occasion Miss D was placed on hold for a long time. One of the agents told Miss D that the app was "confusing" and that it wasn't a good system for monitoring the account balance.

Having listened to all the calls, I don't think Miss D was provided with clear information about her account. The agents gave conflicting information about whether there was an account balance or not.

All of the conflicting information left Miss D not knowing what she owed. And when she did find out that the balance was much higher than she thought, this caused her distress. I don't think Miss D would've accumulated such a large balance if the mobile app had functioned in a more customer friendly way.

It isn't the role of this service to tell a bank how an app should work, or how a balance should be displayed. However, Miss D was entitled to clear and accurate information, and I'm not persuaded that Barclays provided this. This was poor customer service and I'm of the view that Barclays should pay compensation for the distress and inconvenience caused to Miss D.

Putting things right

Miss D has used the card to make purchases and there's a balance on the account. Because Miss D has had the benefit of what she's spent on the card. I think it's fair that she should repay this. I understand that Barclays has already waived interest and charges on the balance. Going forwards, Barclays should agree an affordable payment plan with Miss D for the balance.

Barclays should pay compensation of £150 to Miss D for distress and inconvenience.

My final decision

My final decision is that I uphold the complaint. Barclays Bank Plc must pay compensation of £150 to Miss D.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss D to accept or reject my decision before 6 September 2023.

Emma Davy
Ombudsman