

The complaint

Mr C complains that Amazon Payments UK Limited (APUK) won't close his account and release the funds that belong to him.

What happened

Mr C says that on 26 March 2020, APUK suspended his seller account for high pricing and keeping his funds on hold when all items that were purchased were shipped and signed for by customers over 18 months ago. He says APUK have told him he was selling as an incorrect legal entity, but Mr C disputes this as he says he's only ever sold from his garage and shed, therefore he was registered as an individual seller. Mr C says he's requested that his seller account is closed down on two occasions, but they won't close his account and release his funds back to him. Mr C made a complaint to APUK.

APUK did not uphold Mr C's complaint, so Mr C brought his complaint to our service. Our investigator did not uphold Mr C's complaint. He said APUK have explained that Mr C selected he was trading as an individual as a seller category upon registration, but following an APUK review, it was identified that Mr C was trading as a professional, determined by the volume of sales made. He said APUK have denied Mr C's request for his funds to be released, as he must first register as a business, and successfully complete their verification process. Our investigator said he's seen no evidence to confirm that Mr C has done this.

Mr C asked for an ombudsman to review his complaint. He said he had loads of items left over from his loft conversion and the sales were high at that time because of the pandemic. He said he did not buy these items to sell on. Mr C said that there is a £15,000 limit on the seller account, but his funds are under that amount.

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 considered what Mr C has said about the £15,000 limit on the seller account and his funds are under that amount, but APUK believe he is trading as a professional based on the number of sales as opposed to the funds he has in his account. Although Mr C has said he had loads of items left over from his loft conversion and he didn't buy the items to sell on, APUK have told us that Mr C received 623 orders for various products. They said in addition to the volume of orders, the type of items listed on his account included earplugs, respirators, face masks and eu de parfum sprays, which is indicative of a business account rather than an individual account.

So based on the volume of orders Mr C received and the type of items he listed on his account, I'm satisfied that APUK requesting Mr C to update the classification of his account to keep in line with APUK's policies was proportionate – even if his sales were high because of the pandemic.

In order for Mr C's funds to be released and his account to be closed, he will need to update

the classification of his account and verify his identity. The terms of the account show APUK can do this, as they state "*We may require you to provide additional information to verify your and/or your business' identity as a condition of providing the Service to you or before we permit you to receive or transfer funds from your Account*". Mr C missed a virtual appointment with APUK on 21 April 2023. APUK sent Mr C an email on 27 June 2023 to let him know how he could reschedule the appointment. If Mr C does not have a copy of this email anymore, then he can contact our investigator who can forward the email to him. But it follows I don't require APUK to do anything further.

My final decision

I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr C to accept or reject my decision before 31 August 2023.

Gregory Sloanes
Ombudsman