

## **The complaint**

Mrs M complains that Lloyds Bank PLC treated her unfairly when she noticed problems with her debit card. She further complains that her attempts to report fraud were dealt with poorly by the bank.

## **What happened**

Mrs M noticed the name on her debit card had an extra initial printed on it. She raised this with the branch manager at her local branch who advised it wouldn't affect the use of the card.

Mrs M remained concerned about this as she believed her identity was being used by others in unrelated activity, and the extra initial could be an attempt to take her funds.

Mrs M also attempted to report fraud to the same branch. She was advised to report it from home, rather than use the branch phone. Mrs M thought this advice was intended to prevent her from reporting fraud.

Mrs M visited her branch on three occasions and spoke with a member of their fraud team to change the name on her card as it was incorrect and remained a risk to her for fraudulent misuse by others. She received a new card, but this still had the additional initial on it which took more time to replace.

Mrs M complained about her treatment from the branch manager, how they'd dealt with her request for a new card and being told to go home and call the fraud team.

Lloyds looked into the complaint and accepted that more care could have been taken when at the branch and Mrs M's concerns listened to in more depth. Lloyds explained that the advice concerning using Mrs M's own phone was to assist her as using the branch phone would result in waiting in the same phone queue which this could take some time.

The branch manager apologised directly to Mrs M and Lloyds wrote to her explaining the situation, including a written apology and a payment of £50 for the way they'd dealt with her situation.

Mrs M rejected Lloyds handling of her complaint and brought it to the Financial Ombudsman Service for an independent review. It was looked into by one of our investigators who requested information from both parties. The investigator considered all the evidence provided by the parties and concluded that Lloyds failed to deal with Mrs M appropriately and recommended an additional payment of £150. It was commented that:

- Mrs M had explained the impact the incorrect card details was having on her.
- She was made to feel her concerns weren't taken seriously.
- Lloyds could have dealt with her fraud concerns better.

- Lloyds caused unnecessary stress and delay by the way they dealt with her request for a new debit card.

Mrs M disagreed with the investigators recommendations and made numerous comments. I'll summarise those relevant to her complaint:

- She believed the £150 was insufficient.
- Mrs M stated that she was patronised/intimidated by the bank manager.
- Mrs M believed the advice to call the fraud team from home was to distance Lloyds from their involvement in fraud against her.

### **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.

Mrs M has made numerous complaints concerning her treatment by Lloyds. Some of those complaints were made after Lloyds issued their final response letter to her. In order for those complaints to be properly reviewed, Mrs M should, if she wishes, provide Lloyds an opportunity to review her concerns and issue their own findings. If she feels that they haven't been dealt with to her satisfaction, she's then able to bring them to our service for a further review.

This decision will only relate to her treatment at the branch and the issue of the debit card. I've also noted that Mrs M has made a series of allegations concerning various other organisations and persons. Because none of these directly affect Lloyds, I won't be commenting on them. No disrespect is meant by this, but my remit to review complaints only stretches to those businesses authorised by the Financial Conduct Authority.

It's apparent from the evidence that Lloyds accept that they handled the personalisation of Mrs M's debit card poorly. Their records show that the extra initial had been present on earlier cards and the impact on Mrs M's finances was negligible. But, once it was raised with them and taking into the context of the additional difficulties Mrs M was experiencing, I think Lloyds didn't act fairly or reasonably towards her. It would have been appropriate to take her concerns seriously when she raised them and reissued the card based on her request.

The impact of this was to cause her unnecessary additional stress and worry at a difficult time, although having read the branch managers explanation, I don't think the way they dealt with it was done to intentionally cause Mrs M further problems. Rather I think they misunderstood the impact of their approach on her.

I also understand the comments made by the branch manager to use her home phone. It appears he was concerned that Mrs M would have been left on the phone in the branch for a long time and thought doing it from the comfort of her own home was the better option. I think here that whilst he had the best of intentions, there was a failure to explain this clearly to Mrs M. She perceived the comments as something else entirely – but in the circumstances (and hindsight), it would have been more appropriate to assist her with her claim more directly. I've also read Mrs M's belief about why she was advised to use her own phone and there's no evidence to support her assertions regarding Lloyds involvement in fraud.

Overall I agree with the investigator's recommendations here and I think an additional payment of £150 is more appropriate for the impact the handling of the issues had on Mrs M. Lloyds were told by Mrs M of the difficulties she was struggling with and the lack of understanding led to additional unnecessary stress and inconvenience to Mrs M.

### **Putting things right**

Lloyds should now pay her an additional £150 for the reasons set out above.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that I uphold this complaint and Lloyds Bank PLC are instructed to settle the complaint as outlined above.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs M to accept or reject my decision before 1 December 2023.

David Perry  
**Ombudsman**