

## **The complaint**

Mr R is unhappy with the service he received from PrePay Technologies Limited when he was on holiday.

## **What happened**

Mr R took out a travel card for his holiday. When he arrived at his destination, he tried to make withdrawals on the card. Unfortunately, one of his withdrawals was not successful, but did manage to make a number of other withdrawals that same day. When Mr R tried to make further withdrawals, his transactions were declined. He was concerned about this as he had not withdrawn his full balance, and Mr R says these were the only funds he had brought with him on his holiday.

Mr R says he tried to contact PrePay to discuss what happened and to see if he could get the remaining funds on the card released. Mr R says he called PrePay and he was told he would receive a call back. He also says he sent them an email, but he never received a response. Mr R has told us he had to borrow money from a family member to ensure he had enough funds to get by on his holiday.

When Mr R returned to the UK he called PrePay again and it confirmed the funds would be back with him in 24 hours, which they were. But Mr R was not happy so complained to PrePay. He says he was not given any reasons as to why the issues occurred and did not feel he was fairly compensated.

PrePay responded and it explained that the remaining funds in the card had gone into pending status and so it would not have been able to release the funds even if it had managed to contact him. PrePay say it cannot find a record of Mr R calling them whilst he was on holiday but acknowledged it did not respond to his email due to a technical issue. This meant PrePay was unable to receive emails so the email from Mr R was received later. Mr R remained unhappy so referred the complaint to our service.

Our investigator considered the case. She did not think PrePay had acted unreasonably in relation to the funds entering a pending status on his card. But she did think PrePay should have done more when he tried to contact it to try and resolve this issue. She recommended PrePay pay Mr R £100 in compensation for the distress and inconvenience caused.

Mr R accepted the view but PrePay did not agree. It said it could not locate a call for Mr R and even if it had responded to his email, Mr R would still have had to call to discuss the issues with the transactions. It also said as the funds went into pending status it would not have been able to do anything further in line with the card scheme rules so the earliest the funds would have been released would have been seven days.

Because PrePay did not agree the complaint has been passed to me to make a final 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 done so, I've decided to uphold the complaint. I'll explain why.

I note Mr R has said he was left without funds by PrePay and he had to rely on a family member to help him manage through his holiday. I understand this may have been frustrating and inconvenient to have to rely on someone else for funds. But I do not think PrePay would have been able to release his funds and it was not PrePay that placed this pending status on the funds. So, I do not think it would be fair to say PrePay did something wrong in relation to this part of his complaint.

I can understand it would have been worrying for Mr R. He had gone on holiday and suddenly a large amount of his funds that he was expecting to use, were not available to him. I appreciate what PrePay has said in relation to the pending status of the funds and that even if it had spoken to him, it would not have been able to reverse this as Mr R would have wanted. But I do think it could have done more to support Mr R with his concerns in the circumstances here.

Whilst I cannot be certain that Mr R called PrePay from his hotel to try to address the issue, it's clear he did contact it. And PrePay admit it should have replied to his email but due to a technical error it did not pick up his email until much later. If PrePay had picked up the email and replied as it should have, I'm satisfied Mr R would have called PrePay to understand the problem. And so had this happened I think it would have helped reassure him, that even though he could not access them at the time, his funds were not missing.

Overall, I agree with the investigator that this matter caused avoidable inconvenience. In instances like this, what would be the appropriate remedy is never a matter of exact science. However, on balance, I consider that the remedy proposed by the investigator is fair and reasonable in all the circumstances of the complaint and is broadly in line with what we would normally award where the impact was more than minimal, which is the case here.

## **My final decision**

My final decision is that I uphold this complaint and direct PrePay Technologies Limited to pay £100 to Mr R.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr R to accept or reject my decision before 29 February 2024.

Jag Dhuphar  
**Ombudsman**