

## **The complaint**

G is an unincorporated business run by a sole trader, whom I'll call Ms M. Prepay Technologies Ltd is a representative of Mettle Ventures Ltd, and I'll refer to it as Mettle.

Ms M complains that Mettle blocked her business account and then delayed payment of the funds in it.

## **What happened**

Towards the end of 2023 Mettle sent Ms M notices asking for some information about her business. It had identified that the business had changed its name and wanted to check whether its activities had changed as well. The notices said that Mettle would restrict the account if it didn't receive a response by 5 January 2024.

Ms M says she didn't receive the notices, and the account was blocked. This prompted Ms M to contact Mettle and to provide the information requested. She told Mettle that her business had not changed its activities, and she was told the block would be lifted.

In fact, it was a few days until the block was lifted. In the meantime, an insurance premium fell due. Because Ms M's account was blocked, it was not paid and Ms M incurred a £25 default fee. Mettle agreed to refund it.

Mettle then decided to close the account, and gave Ms M notice that it would do so in 60 days. It asked Ms M to provide details of an account to which it should transfer funds. It said it would arrange a transfer within 15 days. Ms M's account statements show that it took 16 working days for the transfer to be made. Ms M has not complained about the decision to close the account, only about the process which was followed.

Ms M complained to Mettle and then to this service. One of our investigators considered what had happened by did not recommend that the complaint be upheld. Ms M did not accept the investigator's recommendation and asked that an ombudsman review the case.

## **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 reached the same overall conclusions as the investigator did, and for similar reasons.

I note that Ms M says she didn't see the notices asking her about her business. They were not where she would have expected to see notifications of that kind in Mettle's app. That is of course unfortunate, but it is not for me to tell Mettle how it should set up its online and mobile services. It can take its own business decisions in such matters.

When Ms M replied to Mettle's enquiries, it indicated that the account block would be lifted almost immediately, but it was a few days until the account became operational again. That

led to a default fee, but I'm pleased to see that Mettle has reimbursed that. It is fair that it should do so.

The transfer of funds on closure of the account took one day longer than Mettle indicated it would take. I don't believe that was unreasonable or that the delay was significant, and I do not propose to make an award in respect of it. In reaching that conclusion, I am aware that it would have taken a day or two until funds were available in the new account.

### **My final decision**

For these reasons, my final decision is that I do not uphold Ms M's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Ms M to accept or reject my decision before 1 November 2024.

Mike Ingram

**Ombudsman**