

The complaint

Mr S complains about the service he received from American Express Services Europe Limited (“AESEL”) when he contacted them to pay the balance on his account.

What happened

Mr S held an American Express Platinum Cashback Credit Card. On 6 June 2024 he called AESEL to pay the balance on the account but instead of providing the total amount outstanding as requested by Mr S the agent provided the statement outstanding balance. This resulted in Mr S being left with an outstanding balance to be paid the following month on which he incurred interest.

Mr S was unhappy that during the same call, the agent asked him to call the credit servicing team but didn’t explain why. He was also unhappy that the agent initially wouldn’t share his complaint reference number with him and that he had to contact AESEL by chat later to obtain this.

Mr S complained to AESEL.

AESEL upheld the complaint. In its final response dated 21 June 2024 it said it was sorry that Mr S’s experience had left him dissatisfied. It acknowledged that the agent had miscalculated the statement balance outstanding rather than the total amount outstanding and agreed that the service provided had fallen short causing inconvenience to Mr S. AESEL said it had shared feedback with the agent and offered compensation of £100 to Mr S.

Mr S remained unhappy and brought his complaint to this service. He didn’t think the compensation was sufficient for the time he had wasted and the amount of wrong information which had been given to him.

Our investigator didn’t uphold the complaint. She said the compensation paid was in line with what this service would recommend.

Mr S didn’t agree so I’ve been asked to review the complaint.

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 reviewed the account statements and contact notes provided by AESEL. I’ve also considered the final response issued by AESEL.

AESEL has acknowledged that it provided Mr S with incorrect information when he called to obtain his account balance. It has also acknowledged that the agent failed to share the complaint reference number initially and made Mr S wait without explaining that there was a technical issue. AESEL also accepts that the agent didn’t explain why Mr S was advised to call the credit department.

I appreciate that the poor service from AESEL has caused Mr S time and inconvenience. I've thought about whether the apology, and the offer of £100 compensation, is a fair way to resolve the complaint, having regard to the impact on Mr S.

On balance, I think the compensation offered is fair and reasonable. I'll explain why.

It isn't the role of this service to punish a business for errors it has made. What we do is look at the impact on the error and decide what's a fair and reasonable resolution. I can see that Mr S was caused some inconvenience as a result of AESEL's errors and the service failings will have caused him frustration. But I'm satisfied that the compensation offered is in line with what this service would award based on our guidelines. The compensation offered recognises that a simple apology isn't enough and that there were errors and delays which caused inconvenience. I'm satisfied that the sum of £100 is fair.

Therefore, for the reasons I've given, I won't be asking AESEL to increase the compensation.

My final decision

My final decision is that I don't uphold the complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr S to accept or reject my decision before 23 October 2024.

Emma Davy
Ombudsman