

## The complaint

Mrs B complains about the service she received from The Royal Bank of Scotland Plc ('RBS') after she told the bank she'd lost her debit card.

Mrs B has brought her complaint to us with the support of a representative.

## What happened

In November 2023 Mrs B called RBS to say she'd lost her debit card. Unfortunately she failed the security check but RBS noted in its records that the card was missing. Mrs B said she was very upset during the call and burst into tears. She said RBS didn't offer her any way to resolve the situation and she was due to go away on holiday the following day. She had to borrow money from friends, which was embarrassing.

Mrs B then found her debit card. In the presence of her representative she called RBS again and this time she passed the security check. But RBS told her it couldn't 'unfreeze' the card. RBS told Mrs B that it would order her another card, which would take three to five working days to arrive at her home address.

Seven days later Mrs B went to a RBS branch because the replacement card had not arrived. She says RBS told her that the replacement card had not been ordered as she'd failed security checks but Mrs B told RBS this was not correct.

RBS's branch staff ordered the replacement card the same day and arranged for Mrs B to withdraw cash from her account. Mrs B's representative says the card arrived four days later.

On her behalf, Mrs B's representative complained about the service Mrs B had received from RBS. She told RBS that Mrs B was a vulnerable, older woman and it wasn't safe for her to carry cash rather than a debit card.

RBS looked into the complaint. It said it had been unable to locate and listen to the telephone calls Mrs B had made to it. But it accepted her version of events, apologised and paid her £100 compensation for her distress and inconvenience, to include an amount towards her travel to the branch.

Mrs B made some further points to RBS and then had to chase for a response. RBS apologised for its delay in returning to her. But it said her additional points didn't change its view that £100 compensation was fair.

Unhappy with the outcome, Mrs B came to us. Our Investigator thought the £100 compensation RBS had paid Mrs B for its delay in sending the replacement card was fair. But he thought RBS could have done more to support Mrs B during her first call and recommended RBS pay an additional £50 compensation for her distress and inconvenience.

RBS agreed to offer the additional compensation. Mrs B didn't accept the offer, which she said wasn't enough for her distress and inconvenience. She was concerned RBS had been

unable to locate the call recordings, which she thought was 'fraudulent'. She'd been without a debit card for three weeks in total and had a 'black mark' with the credit reference agencies due to a failed credit card payment.

### **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 been sorry to hear about Mrs B's distress following her calls to RBS after she lost her debit card. But I think total compensation of £150 is fair. I'll explain my reasons, focusing on what I think are the key points.

RBS has not been able to locate the call recordings for Mrs B's calls to it about her missing card. Our Investigator gave RBS the telephone numbers from which the calls were made, including Mrs B's representative's number. But RBS said it could not locate the calls. While I think that was unfortunate I've seen no evidence that the failure to locate the calls was 'fraudulent'. In my view, RBS responded fairly when it accepted Mrs B's version of events.

Mrs B has described how upset she was during her first call to RBS and the stress this caused her. RBS has accepted it should have handled things better and has apologised to Mrs B in its final response letters. But I agree with our Investigator that RBS should pay Mrs B additional compensation to reflect her upset and I think an additional £50 is fair.

I think RBS was correct to mark Mrs B's card as lost on its system, even though she initially failed its security checks. Ultimately this was to protect both Mrs B and RBS.

It must have been frustrating for Mrs B that RBS could not 'unfreeze' Mrs B's card when she found it. But RBS should have ordered another card the same day. It accepts there was a delay. I see that the card was ordered only after Mrs B went into the branch seven days later. And on that occasion, Mrs B was understandably upset to be told that the delay in ordering the card was because she'd failed security, which wasn't correct.

The branch was able to allow Mrs B to withdraw some cash from her account. I can see it wasn't ideal for Mrs B to have to use cash but I think it was correct that RBS arranged for her to have access to her money.

Mrs B has not given us any additional evidence about her missed credit card payment or the impact on her credit file. I think it's likely that RBS could have made a payment to her credit card account had she asked it to do so. I don't think I can fairly say the missed payment was RBS's responsibility.

I think RBS issued its first final response letter within a reasonable length of time. Mrs B had to chase for a response to her follow up points and I think RBS correctly apologised to her for having to chase it.

Unfortunately Mrs B would always have experienced some upset and inconvenience having lost her card just before her holiday. But she should have received the replacement card earlier than she did, so I think it was fair for RBS to pay her some compensation.

I think that compensation of £150 in total is fair and reasonable to reflect Mrs B's distress and inconvenience caused by RBS's accepted shortcomings in its service to her.

I've seen from Mrs B's bank statement that RBS paid the compensation of £100 into her RBS account on 5 January 2024. So I think it should now pay her the additional £50

compensation as it has agreed to do.

**My final decision**

For the reasons I've given I uphold this complaint. I require The Royal Bank of Scotland Plc to pay Mrs B £50 for her distress and inconvenience, which is in addition to the £100 it has already paid to her, as it has agreed to do.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs B to accept or reject my decision before 30 August 2024.

Amanda Maycock  
**Ombudsman**