

The complaint

Mr D complains Curve UK Limited (Curve) provided poor customer service when it blocked his account.

What happened

Mr D says in late June 2024 he experienced issues using his Curve card and was unable to make transactions for almost two weeks. Mr D says he eventually discovered his account had been blocked but he wasn't made aware of that and despite a series of online chats and emails it took Curve two weeks before his account block was lifted.

Mr D says this matter caused him inconvenience and upset as he wasn't sure if the block had affected his other cards associated with the account. Mr D says although Curve have accepted its mistake, it has only offered him £10 by way of compensation which he feels doesn't go far enough.

Curve says under its terms and conditions it may block customers accounts if it has a concern about the security of the account, which is what happened here. Curve says an automatic block was triggered by its systems risk engine and it apologised for not informing Mr D. Curve has accepted it didn't provide the level of service it should have when Mr D raised the issue and apologised for that. That said, Curve feel that its apology, offer to refund a pro rata subscription fee of £6.30 and £10 by way of compensation is fair.

Mr D wasn't happy with Curve's response and referred the matter to this service.

The investigator looked at all the available information and upheld the complaint.

The investigator says Curve acted reasonably when it placed the block on Mr D's account, but it took longer than it should to complete the review and remove the block. The investigator felt the compensation offered by Curve didn't take into account the level of inconvenience Mr D faced as he was unable to access his account and had to chase them for the progress of the account review, which wasn't his fault.

The investigator felt a total compensation payment of £50 including the subscription refund was more appropriate.

Curve didn't agree with the investigator's view and asked for the matter to be referred to an ombudsman for 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 will also be upholding this complaint and I will explain how I have come to my decision.

I can understand it would've been worrying for Mr D to not be able to use his Curve card

without understanding why. When looking at this complaint I'll consider if Curve provided sufficient support to Mr D when it blocked his account and if the compensation it offered is reasonable. It's worth saying Curve have accepted it should have advised Mr D it had blocked his account at the time, and the service it provided after that, wasn't good enough.

I accept Curve acted reasonably when it placed the block on Mr D's account, as it had concerns over the account security and it has an obligation to protect its customers. But what isn't reasonable here is that it never informed Mr D of that at the time and by its own admission took longer than it should to have dealt with the account review after Mr D raised this with them.

Although I understand the point Curve makes that his underlying other cards weren't affected and could be used by him, Mr D wasn't aware of that until he found out what the problem was suing his Curve card. From the information I have seen, Mr D was left to chase Curve regarding the lifting of the block which took almost two weeks to complete.

So, while Curve have offered to pro rata refund his account charges for that period and pay Mr D £10 for the service delays he experienced, like the investigator I feel a more suitable level of redress here would be £50 in total, for the reasons I have already explained.

While Curve will be disappointed with my decision, I am satisfied this is a fair outcome here.

Putting things right

I instruct Curve UK Limited to pay Mr D a total of £50 by way of compensation less any pro rata subscription fees it has already refunded.

My final decision

My final decision is that I uphold this complaint.

I instruct Curve UK Limited to pay Mr D a total of £50 by way of compensation less any pro rata subscription fees it has already refunded.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr D to accept or reject my decision before 19 November 2024.

Barry White
Ombudsman