

## **The complaint**

Miss W complains that Barclays Bank Plc trading as Barclaycard provided incorrect advice when it told her to cancel her direct debit. She says that as a result she's missed payments and has incurred interest and charges. Miss W is also unhappy that the Barclaycard app showed that she had a zero balance even though the balance wasn't zero.

## **What happened**

Miss W holds a Barclaycard business credit card. In February 2024 she contacted Barclays to query why amounts were being paid out of her bank account, but that when she looked on the Barclaycard app it showed a balance of zero with no evidence of the payments crediting the account. Miss W was concerned that the payments were fraudulent. She says she was told by a call handler at Barclays that the payments were a scam and that she should cancel the direct debit.

When Miss W spoke to Barclays again around two days later, it was established that the payments were going to her Barclaycard account, so she reinstated the direct debit.

In August 2023 Miss W received a text from Barclays to advise her that her payment was late. Miss W checked the Barclaycard app, and it showed a balance of zero, so she ignored the text message. A few days later she received an email advising her that she couldn't use her Barclaycard anymore. Miss W checked the app again and it showed a zero balance.

Miss W contacted Barclays and was advised by the call handler that her balance was over £1500. Miss W paid £200 as she was in a panic. She then realised that her direct debit hadn't been collected and she'd been charged interest and fees on a balance she knew nothing about because the app told her that the balance was zero.

Miss W complained to Barclays. She said she wanted her balance to reflect the balance she could see on the app, which was zero. She asked for the payment of £200 she'd made to be refunded and for details of how much interest she'd been charged. She asked for her credit file to be amended and for compensation.

Miss W didn't receive a response from Barclays, so she brought her complaint to this service.

Following the referral of the complaint to this service, Barclays said it hadn't received Miss W's letter of complaint which was why it hadn't investigated and issued a final response. It provided information to this service which was considered by the investigator.

Our investigator upheld the complaint in part. He said he couldn't see that Barclays had done anything wrong by charging fees and interest on the account balance but said he was satisfied that there had been a customer service failure in not acknowledging or responding to Miss W's complaint and recommended that Barclays paid £100 compensation.

Miss W 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 know it will disappoint Miss W, but I agree with the investigators opinion. I'll explain why.

I've read and considered the whole file, but I'll concentrate my comments on what I think is relevant. If I don't comment on any specific point, it's not because I've failed to take it on board and think about it, but because I don't think I need to comment on it in order to reach what I think is the right outcome.

Where the information I've got is incomplete, unclear or contradictory, as some of it is here, I have to base my decision on the balance of probabilities.

Part of Miss W's complaint relates to what she says was incorrect advice given to her by Barclays to cancel her direct debit. Miss W has told this service that two calls with Barclays took place on 15 February 2024, in which she was advised that the payments resulted from a scam and that she should cancel her direct debit and a further call took place on 17 February 2024 in which she was advised that the payments were legitimate.

Barclays has told this service that it can only identify three calls from Miss W, one on 26 February 2024 (during which Miss W set up a direct debit), one on 28 March 2024 (to discuss overdue payment) and one on 22 July 2024 (relating to the complaint made to this service).

Miss W advised this service that she'd been mistaken and that the calls on 15 and 17 February 2024 had been made to someone else. She said she could see that she'd made a call to Barclays on 20 February 2024 and attached a screenshot.

This service provided the screenshot to Barclays, who confirmed that the call was made to the personal Barclaycard team and the discussions were not relevant to Miss W's business card which is the subject matter of this complaint.

Because of the lack of evidence that a call took place in which Miss W was advised to cancel her direct debit, I'm unable to safely conclude that such a call took place and/or that Barclays advised Miss W to cancel her direct debit. It follows that I can't fairly say that Barclays are responsible for Miss W's missed payment, or any late payment charges which flowed from that missed payment. The terms and conditions of the account state that charges may be applied if payments are late.

I've gone on to consider the part of Miss W's complaint which relates to the app. She's said that the balance shown on the app was always zero and she had no idea that a balance existed.

Barclays has explained that the app can only be used to track a current billing cycles spending. Once this spending is billed, the balance resets to zero and the monthly statement is produced. Barclays has provided information to show that Miss W is registered for the online platform and is able to access statements which show the full breakdown of what is owed on the account.

Miss W has said that she wasn't aware that the app didn't show the full balance owed. I've seen a screen shot from the app which states that the limit shown may not reflect the actual spending on the card.

Even if Miss W wasn't aware that the app reverted to zero in each billing cycle, I think it's reasonable to expect Miss W to be aware of what spending she's done on the account and what payments she's made. Miss W has confirmed that she was able to access the account online using her desktop, even though she's said that she didn't do this very often.

I've reviewed the statements for the account. These show that the account has a balance. These also show the amount of interest charged on the balance. Barclays has confirmed that Miss W has online access to the last 12 months of account statements, so she is able to see what the balance is and how much interest she's been charged.

I can see from the statements that Miss W has been paying the minimum payment each month. I'm satisfied that interest has been correctly applied to the balance in line with the terms and conditions of the account.

Based on what I've seen, I'm satisfied that there is a balance on the account and that interest has been correctly applied. So I won't be asking Barclays to write off the balance and/or refund interest. If Miss W wants the £200 payment she made previously refunded, Barclays has said it can do this, but this will increase the balance owed by £200 meaning potentially longer to pay back the balance and a higher interest amount.

Taking all of the available information into account, I haven't seen evidence to persuade me that Barclays has made an error or treated Miss W unfairly.

I agree with the investigator that there were service failings by Barclays because it failed to acknowledge or respond to Miss W's complaint. This has caused Miss W distress and inconvenience, for which I think compensation of £100 should be paid.

### **Putting things right**

To put things right, Barclays Bank Plc trading as Barclaycard must pay compensation of £100 to Miss W.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that I partially uphold the complaint. Barclays Bank Plc trading as Barclaycard must pay compensation of £100 to Miss W.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss W to accept or reject my decision before 7 January 2025.

Emma Davy  
**Ombudsman**