

The complaint

Miss R is unhappy with the service she received from Barclays Bank UK PLC (Barclays) after her account was compromised.

What happened

A new debit card was issued to Miss R when Barclays detected a compromise on her account. Miss R accepts this precaution was to protect her from possible future fraud but states that it also subsequently caused her nothing but problems.

Miss R explains that on being alerted to unauthorised transactions on her account, she contacted Barclays to report her concerns. But despite reassurances from Barclays that her card had been blocked, she continued to receive notifications of transaction attempts. This resulted in her having to recontact Barclays on more than one occasion and leaving her disappointed with the service Barclays provided.

Barclays investigated Miss R's concerns and agreed it had caused her inconvenience which could have been avoided by unlinking her card when required. It also accepted that the text alerts she was receiving, would have caused an element of stress and inconvenience to her. It made an offer of £100 in recognition of these issues.

Our investigator on reviewing the offer Barclays made, found it to be fair. While she sympathised with Miss R, she considered the offer to be in line with our awards.

Miss R did not agree. She felt that further compensation was justified based on Barclay's handling of the situation and that Barclays fraud prevention processes failed to stop further fraudulent transactions from being attempted.

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 too am unable to uphold this complaint for broadly the same reasons as our investigator.

I can see that Miss R has strong feelings on the matter and has provided extensive submissions to this effect. I'd like to assure Miss R that if I don't mention a particular point, it's not because I haven't considered it, but that I've focused instead on what I believe to be important to the outcome of this complaint.

Firstly, I am sorry to hear about the impact this overall experience has had on Miss R's mental health. I don't doubt this was a troubling time for Miss R and that it would have been distressing for her to know that her account was at risk.

It's clear from what's been presented that when Barclays fraud prevention system recognised Miss R's account had been compromised, it promptly acted to block her existing

card and sent her a replacement. But although it was hoped that this intervention would put a stop to any further attempts to defraud Miss R, an unauthorised payment of £7.90 debited her account. I can see that Barclays acted quickly to refund Miss R once this payment was identified as unauthorised, so Miss R did not experience any financial detriment. And I am satisfied that Barclays took the appropriate action to safeguard her here.

Although it's clear Miss R accepts that Barclays were acting in her best interests and protecting her from fraud by taking action when it did, she feels this intervention led to further issues and its handling of her concerns ultimately caused her frustration and inconvenience. In particular, Miss R mentions having to reach out to Barclays on more than one occasion on receiving notifications of activity on her account to confirm it was not her, which she feels persisted despite Barclays stating it had blocked her card.

Barclays acknowledged that initially due to its error, Miss R was caused inconvenience in having to make further contact because her card had not been unlinked correctly when it should have been. I agree this would have troubled Miss R and could have been avoided had Barclays taken due care to establish this at the outset. But I can see Barclays took steps to put things right and it offered Miss R £50 in recognition of this failing which she accepted.

I can also see that when Miss R subsequently raised concerns about the alerts she continued to receive, Barclays made efforts early on, to explain it was their automated fraud system that sent these messages and they highlighted whether the transaction on the account was considered fraudulent or genuine, which I think would have reasonably alleviated any concerns going forward. In recognition of the worry caused to Miss R and the time she spent querying the messages, Barclays also made a further offer of £50.

Barclays has provided evidence to show that an unauthorised recurring payment was set up on Miss R's account, which would explain why further payments continued to be attempted on her account despite action being taken to block her card. Understandably, I can appreciate that continuing to receive text messages alerting Miss R to further possible fraudulent activity was not ideal, and it would have been disconcerting for her. But as Barclays shared their rationale for the messages when Miss R flagged them and continued to protect Miss R from any further financial loss by declining the payments, I feel Barclays acted reasonably in its approach to the situation.

Miss R has detailed the effort she put into having to reach out to Barclays and feels that it did not do enough to assist her. She states that compensation of £800 more accurately reflects the level of disruption and inconvenience she experienced, and she feels that Barclays mishandled the situation. But when considering what a business should do to put things right, it's not my role to punish it, instead I consider the direct impact its actions have had on a customer. I'm also mindful that much of the distress Miss R mentions, was caused by the unauthorised third-party accessing and using her details to attempt payments on her account, and it wasn't the fault of Barclays, who it seems were working to protect her.

I have given great thought to Miss R's position, and I appreciate Miss R feels that a higher level of compensation should be awarded based on Barclays overall handling of the situation. But like the investigator I've not seen any evidence to reasonably justify a higher level of award. Our website further outlines the awards made by this service for distress and inconvenience.

I recognise Miss R was caused a degree of worry by what happened and receiving alerts as to the activity on her account contributed to this. But I understand Miss R also had the option of checking her account online, if she remained worried about the alerts she was getting - despite Barclays also having explained the reasons why they continued to be sent - but decided not to do so.

I understand Miss R's reasons for this, but as Miss R's concerns primarily refer to the inconvenience she was caused by having to continuously contact Barclays, it seems Miss R also didn't take steps to help alleviate this even though she had the ability to do so. So, considering this, I think the compensation Barclays has already awarded to Miss R is fair.

Miss R also raises that being left without the use of her card for two weeks, caused her inconvenience and took away her financial independence. And states that although she had access to another bank card during this time, any cash withdrawals would have incurred a transaction fee, and so she found herself having to rely on her partner for cash which was stressful and uncomfortable for her.

I can appreciate the situation was less than perfect for Miss R, but I can see that although replacement cards were requested by Barclays on a number of occasions, it's likely they were cancelled as a preventative measure, because fraudulent transactions continued to be seen on Miss R's account. I think this was necessary given the ongoing threat of future fraud on the account and although I can understand Miss R would have preferred to have retained full access to her account, I think it's fair to say she continued to have the option of transferring money to her partner's account, so helping in maintaining her financial independence given the circumstances, which I realise was important to her.

I sympathise with Miss R, and I realise this won't be the outcome she was hoping for. But given all of the above, I won't be upholding this complaint or instructing Barclays to take any further action.

Barclays it seems attempted to do what it could to protect Miss R, and I can see that due to its proactive action there was no actual financial loss incurred by Miss R. I appreciate why Miss R feels a higher amount should be awarded in compensation, but I consider the payment of £100 to be fair and reasonable in the circumstances of this complaint. I hope Miss R will understand, given what I've explained, why I've made the final decision that I have.

My final decision

My final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

I request Barclays pay Miss R £100 if it hasn't already done so. Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss R to accept or reject my decision before 1 July 2025.

Sukhdeep Judge

Ombudsman