

## **The complaint**

Mr L complains HSBC UK Bank Plc (“HSBC”) blocked his account, withheld his funds for an unreasonable period, and done so without explanation.

Mr L says HSBC’s actions have caused him significant financial difficulty, distress, and inconvenience.

## **What happened**

The details of this complaint are well known by both parties, so I won’t repeat them again here. Instead, I’ll focus on giving my reasons for my 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 have decided not to uphold this complaint. I’ll explain why.

Mr L’s account has been blocked and funds of around £50,000 withheld since March 2023. I note also that he has contacted HSBC on many occasions and at one point enlisted the services of a solicitor. But Banks in the UK, like HSBC, are strictly regulated and must take certain actions in order to meet their legal and regulatory obligations. They are also required to carry out ongoing monitoring of an existing business relationship. That sometimes means HSBC needs to restrict, or in some cases go as far as closing, customers’ accounts.

HSBC has provided me with a detailed explanation and supporting evidence of why it blocked and withheld Mr L’s funds. Having carefully considered this, I’m satisfied it did so in line with its obligations.

Mr L says his funds have been withheld for an unreasonable period and any investigation HSBC needed to do should have been concluded by now. I can understand why Mr L feels strongly about this. But given the information I have seen, I don’t think HSBC is acting improperly by doing so. I understand Mr L would want to know the information I have weighed to reach this finding. But I am treating this information in confidence, which is a power afforded to me under the Dispute Resolution Rules (DISP), which form part of the Financial Conduct Authority’s regulatory handbook.

I would add too that HSBC is under no obligation to provide Mr L with an explanation.

As I don’t think HSBC has done anything wrong, I see no basis on which to award any compensation for the financial difficulty, distress and inconvenience Mr L says he has suffered.

## **My final decision**

For the reasons above, I have decided not to uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr L to accept or reject my decision before 27 February 2025.

Ketan Nagla  
**Ombudsman**