

## **The complaint**

Mr M says Lloyds Bank PLC (“Lloyds”) failed to block transactions on his account he says it shouldn’t have allowed to go through.

## **What happened**

The facts of this case are well known to both parties, so I won’t repeat them in detail here.

In summary, Mr M says Lloyds should’ve blocked several transactions he made from his account between 18 October 2023 and 23 November 2023. The transactions were all made via open banking to a gambling website, but Mr M says there was a gambling block in place on his account. He also says he asked many times for his account to be blocked from any kind of gambling, but this wasn’t actioned properly. So, he says Lloyds should refund the transactions in dispute it shouldn’t have allowed them to go through.

Lloyds says it has no evidence that Mr M ever made it aware he had a gambling addiction and needed any support. It says it hasn’t been able to locate any calls to that effect and there are no notes on his account regarding this either. Lloyds says Mr M had not been truthful about gambling when he raised his complaint, so it doesn’t think he would’ve been truthful or would’ve changed his behaviour had it intervened at any other point.

Our investigator considered this complaint and decided not to uphold it, Mr M wasn’t happy with this outcome, so the complaint has been passed to me 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.

There is no dispute that these transactions were authorised by Mr M, so I don’t need to consider authorisation in this decision. But Mr M’s complaint is that Lloyds should not have allowed the transactions to go through as he’d taken steps to put gambling blocks on his account. I’ve listened to the calls and read the evidence provided regarding Mr M’s account. Mr M does have another complaint with us against another bank in the same banking group, but in this complaint, I can only look at the information relevant to Mr M’s Lloyds account.

The evidence shows a gambling block being removed from the Mr M’s card ending 3020 on 17 December 2019. Lloyds has explained that this type of gambling freeze only applies to debit card transactions and can be added and removed by the customer themselves. Lloyds says that the terms and conditions of the gambling freeze function set out that this will only restrict debit card payments, and this needed to be accepted during the process of adding it to the account. I have looked at the notes up till October 2024 and there is no reference of this gambling block being reapplied.

I appreciate what Mr M has said about notifying Lloyds of his condition and what he needed, but there is no evidence of this for me to rely on prior to the disputed transactions. I have not heard any calls or seen any notes suggesting Mr M made Lloyds aware that he had a

gambling problem. Also, the transactions in dispute were made via open banking. Lloyds has confirmed that it has no way of stopping faster payments to gambling sites, unless it disables all payments from the account altogether unless they are made in branch. This was not the state of Mr M's account at the time the transactions went through, so I can't say that Lloyds has done anything wrong by allowing them to go through.

Mr M says that the transactions should've also been flagged by Lloyd's fraud team as suspicious or unusual. But I don't agree, and I'll explain why.

I've considered the nature and frequency of the transactions in dispute. The transactions would not be considered unusually large for Mr M's account, with the largest payment of £4,000 being in character with the size and activity usually seen. On 30 October 2023, there were 4 payments made in the same day, but again it is not usual for Mr M to make multiple payments to the same beneficiary in the same day. And even if I make the finding that Lloyds could've intervened during the transactions, I don't think this would've prevented Mr M from continuing to gamble. I say this because as we've seen through this complaint, Mr M finds it hard to talk about this issue and initially denied gambling when raising this complaint. I've also seen evidence that Mr M has become angry when questioned about his payments in the past and has been unable to openly discuss the gambling.

Overall, I am unable to make the finding that Lloyds has done anything wrong here. I am not persuaded a gambling block had been put on Mr M's account which should've prevented the payments in dispute going through. I am also not persuaded Lloyds had been made aware of the problem or that Mr M required any additional support. Furthermore, I do not think that Lloyds should've intervened in the payments, and I think even if it had its unlikely this would have prevented Mr M from gambling.

### **My final decision**

I am not upholding this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr M to accept or reject my decision before 17 February 2025.

Sienna Mahboobani  
**Ombudsman**