

The complaint

G, a limited company, complains that Stripe Payments UK Limited unfairly blocked a payment and then suspended its account. G also complains that Stripe failed to return some of the funds that remained in its account.

G is represented by its director, who I'll refer to as "Mr R".

What happened

Around July last year, Stripe placed restrictions on Mr R's account following a large payment intended for his account. Stripe decided to suspend the account and retained the funds for several months until the risk of third-party disputes had been mitigated.

Mr R complained saying he'd been unable to meet essential business costs, incurred fines and was caused stress. When asked, Mr R advised that the relevant payment was from a customer of his business paying for services he had provided.

Stripe responded that its actions were in line with its terms and assured Mr R that it would release the remaining funds in his account once the relevant dispute period had passed. The firm released the remaining funds at the end of November.

Remaining unhappy, Mr R referred his complaint to this service. Our investigator concluded that Stripe had acted fairly. Mr R doesn't agree and asked for a final decision – so the complaint has been passed to me.

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'm not upholding this complaint.

I've considered Stripe's reason for reviewing and suspending Mr R's account. In doing so, I appreciate that Stripe is entitled to set its own policies and part of that will form its risk criteria. It isn't in my remit to say what policies or risk appetite Stripe should have in place. I can however, while considering the circumstances of individual complaints, decide whether I think customers have been treated fairly.

As long as the firm reaches its decisions fairly, it doesn't breach law or regulations and is in keeping with the terms and conditions of the account, then this service won't usually intervene. Stripe shouldn't decline to continue to provide its services without proper reason, for instance of unfair bias or unlawful discrimination. And it must treat new and existing customers fairly.

Stripe has provided some further details of its decision-making process, I'm sorry but I can't share this information with Mr R due to its commercial sensitivity. But I've seen nothing to suggest Stripe's decision around suspending Mr R's account was unfair.

On balance when considering Stripe's wider regulatory responsibilities and all the information available to me, I find Stripe had a legitimate basis for suspending Mr R's account and not tell him why. So, I don't find Stripe treated Mr R unfairly when it ended its business relationship with him. As I'm satisfied that Stripe hasn't acted inappropriately, it wouldn't be appropriate for me to award Mr R any compensation.

Stripe didn't release the remaining funds in Mr R's account until November. The firm says it wanted to wait for the relevant dispute period to pass, as there was a risk that a customer of Mr R could dispute a payment made to his business – so Stripe could be liable to return any legitimately disputed payments. Based on the information Stripe has provided, I'm persuaded that it was reasonable for Stripe to wait for this length of time before releasing the remaining balance.

Following the investigator's outcome, there seems to have been regular communication between our investigator and both Mr R and Stripe about the funds that remained. Mr R disputes that Stripe has returned all the funds that remained, particularly as he thinks some of the funds that Stripe says were returned to source didn't arrive into his customer's account.

Stripe sent us evidence that the funds were returned in the way that it says and has shown us its calculations, which I can see the firm has verified again. Although Mr R continues to dispute Stripe's calculations, he hasn't been able to evidence his own position. So I'm satisfied that Stripe's calculations are accurate.

In summary, I'm persuaded that Stripe acted fairly. I appreciate Mr R's business experienced some inconvenience. But, for reasons I've explained above, I won't be asking Stripe to take any further action regarding this complaint.

My final decision

For the reasons explained, I'm not upholding this complaint.

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

Abdul Ali
Ombudsman