

The complaint

Mrs M complains that Barclays Bank UK PLC won't refund to her a payment that she made from her bank account.

What happened

Mrs M made a payment of £131.50 from her bank account with Barclays Bank for some plumbing services for her caravan in August 2024. There were some issues with the services provided and Mrs M contacted Barclays Bank about the payment. It raised a dispute with the merchant and credited the disputed payment to Mrs M's account pending the outcome of the claim.

The merchant provided evidence that the payment was correct so the disputed payment was reapplied to Mrs M's bank account. Barclays Bank requested further information from Mrs M but it didn't receive a response so it said that her complaint had been resolved and closed.

Mrs M wasn't satisfied with its response and complained to this service. Her complaint was looked at by one of this service's investigators who, having considered everything, didn't recommend that it should be upheld. He said that he'd been unable to conclude that Barclays Bank hadn't dealt with Mrs M's complaint in a fair and reasonable way.

Mrs M didn't accept his recommendation and asked for her complaint to be considered by an ombudsman. She says that she's also raised a dispute with her trading standards office and that Barclays Bank is pursuing her for the arrears on her account and has reported adverse information to the credit reference agencies about her account. Barclays Bank then agreed to put a hold on the arrears on Mrs M's account until a decision was issued on her 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.

If a consumer disputes a card payment, the card issuer may be able to make a chargeback claim to the merchant under the relevant card scheme to try to settle the dispute. There's no right for a consumer to require that a chargeback claim be made and the applicable scheme rules set out the disputes that can be considered and the time limits for making a claim. If the right to make a chargeback claim exists under the applicable scheme rules, and if there's a reasonable prospect of success, I consider it to be good practice for a chargeback claim to be made.

Mrs M disputed the payment of £131.50 that had been made for the plumbing services. The invoice for those services shows that Mrs M was charged £12.08 for a waste trap, £60 for labour, £37.50 for the call-out and £21.92 for VAT. Barclays Bank raised a dispute with the merchant but it provided evidence to show that the payment was made for one hour of labour that was provided on the day, a call-out fee and for a part that was replaced and that Mrs M hadn't been charged for any work that wasn't done.

Barclays Bank wrote to Mrs M in October 2024 and said that it needed her to send it some specified information about the dispute. Mrs M didn't respond to that request for information so Barclays Bank wrote to Mrs M later that month and said that her complaint had been resolved and closed.

When Mrs M disputed the payment, Barclays Bank credited £131.50 to her account pending the outcome of the claim and, when the merchant provided evidence that the payment was correct, the £131.50 was reapplied to her account. Mrs M says that Barclays Bank is pursuing her for the arrears on her account and has reported adverse information to the credit reference agencies about her account. Barclays Bank is required to report true and accurate information about Mrs M's bank account to the credit reference agencies. I'm not persuaded that there's enough evidence to show that the information that Barclays Bank has reported to the credit reference agencies about Mrs M's bank account isn't true and accurate.

Mrs M is clearly not happy with the services that she received from the merchant but she's not provided evidence to Barclays Bank or to this service to show that the merchant didn't carry out the plumbing services for which she's been charged. I consider that Barclays Bank has acted correctly, and as I would expect it to, in response to Mrs M's dispute of the payment and I'm not persuaded that it dealt with the payment of £131.50 from her to the merchant incorrectly.

It's clear that Mrs M feels strongly that Barclays Bank hasn't acted fairly so I appreciate that my decision will be disappointing for her. I find that it wouldn't be fair or reasonable in these circumstances for me to require Barclays Bank to refund the payment of £131.50 to Mrs M's bank account, to remove from her credit file any adverse information about the arrears on her account that it's reported to the credit reference agencies or to take any other action in response to her complaint.

Barclays Bank agreed to put a hold on the arrears on Mrs M's account. That hold is now likely to be removed so I suggest that Mrs M contacts Barclays Bank about the arrears and explains to it her financial situation. It's required to respond to any financial difficulties that she's experiencing positively and sympathetically.

My final decision

My decision is that I don't uphold Mrs M's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs M to accept or reject my decision before 19 June 2025.

Jarrold Hastings
Ombudsman