

The complaint

Mr K complains that a block that Bank of Scotland plc, trading as Halifax, had put on his credit card stopped a payment that he wanted to make.

What happened

Mr K has a Halifax credit card. He'd complained to Halifax that he hadn't been able to use his credit card when he was overseas in January 2025. It didn't uphold his complaint so he complained to this service. Later in January 2025 he tried to use his credit card to pay £925 for a holiday but the payment was blocked. He contacted Halifax and it said that it had resolved the issue, but when Mr K then booked the holiday the price had increased to £1,072.12.

He complained to Halifax but it said that it had flagged a payment earlier that month for an additional security check and the block was still present when he attempted book the holiday. It said that there was no error with it blocking his card so it wouldn't be liable for the increase in the cost of the holiday. It sent him a cheque for £50 for the time that it took for him to have the block on his card updated.

Mr K wasn't satisfied with its response and complained to this service. His 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 the payment failed due to the security measures that Halifax had in place and he couldn't say that it had acted unreasonably. He also said that the account terms explain that Halifax isn't responsible for any loss if it refuses to process a transaction or delays in doing so.

Mr K didn't accept the investigator's recommendation and has asked for an ombudsman to review his case. He says that the card shouldn't have had a block in the first instance and Halifax has said that the payment was stopped due to a block added to the card earlier in January 2025 but he's been able to use the card since then and payments have been successfully made.

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.

Mr K has made two complaints to this service about issues with the payments that he wanted to make in January 2025 using his Halifax credit card. A decision has been issued on his complaint that he wasn't been able to use his credit card when he was overseas. The ombudsman said that she was unable to say that Halifax had made an error by blocking the card and requiring Mr K to contact the fraud team, as the block was applied in line with the terms and conditions of the account and it had acted in line with its processes and procedures. I'm only considering in this decision Mr K's complaint about the payment for the holiday that was blocked later that month.

Mr K tried to use his credit card in January 2025 to pay £925 for a holiday but the payment was blocked. Halifax says that a block that had been placed on the account earlier that month was still in place and the block was in line with the terms and conditions of the account. It also says that the type of block placed on the account would only block certain transactions so Mr K would have been able to make some payments using his credit card.

Halifax removed the block when Mr K contacted it and he was then able to book the holiday but the price had increased to £1,072.12. The account terms and conditions say that Halifax isn't responsible for any loss if it refuses to process a transaction or delays in doing so and it said that it wouldn't reimburse Mr K for the additional cost of the holiday.

I'm not persuaded that there's enough evidence to show that Halifax acted incorrectly in leaving the block on Mr K's account and I find that it wouldn't be fair or reasonable in these circumstances for me to require Halifax to reimburse Mr K for the additional cost of the holiday.

When Mr K complained to Halifax it sent him a cheque for £50 for the time it took for him to have the block on his card updated. I consider that that was fair and reasonable and I'm not persuaded that it would be fair or reasonable for me to require Halifax to pay any further compensation to him in these circumstances, or to take any other action in response to his complaint.

My final decision

My decision is that I don't uphold Mr K's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr K to accept or reject my decision before 21 July 2025.

Jarrold Hastings
Ombudsman