

## **The complaint**

Ms E complains Metro Bank PLC told a retailer she uses incorrect information about her reclaiming a payment she made.

## **What happened**

Ms E disputed some payments, but Metro made a mistake and disputed a payment Ms E had willingly made. The payment was to a jewellery company, G.

Ms E tried to place an order with G and was told her account with it was closed, because she'd tried to chargeback a payment she'd made. G said Ms E couldn't place further orders.

Ms E complained to Metro, and it sent her a final response letter where it accepted Ms E hadn't disputed a payment to G. Metro accepted it made an error in disputing the payment in question and paid Ms E £100 to compensate her for her inconvenience and distress.

Ms E didn't feel this was anywhere near enough to compensate for her damaged reputation, so she brought her complaint to this service. When Metro sent its submissions to this service it offered Ms E a further £100. Ms E declined this offer.

An investigator looked into things and thought Metro should pay a further £100, bringing the total compensation to £300. The investigator also thought this was entirely Metro's error, but didn't think the effect on Ms E was as serious as she said.

The investigator said G knew about the chargeback but couldn't see anything to say it thought Ms E was a fraudster. The investigator didn't think a subject access request (dSAR) to G would show anything, Ms E couldn't be distressed by something she hadn't seen.

The investigator didn't think Metro needed to send a letter to G, it had already admitted its mistake in writing and Ms E could forward this to G. The investigator didn't think Ms E's request for compensation, based on a court case, was a fair amount for Metro to pay.

Ms E disagreed with this outcome, and said the effect on her reputation was serious and long lasting. Ms E also said Metro had paid her the additional £200 despite her not accepting the investigator's outcome.

Ms E also said she'd requested a dSAR from Metro and it was missing some information, specifically contact between Metro and G.

Ms E asked for an ombudsman to decide things.

## **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's no dispute Metro made a mistake in raising a chargeback against a payment Ms E

made to G. Ms E didn't report any payments to G as ones she hadn't made.

Metro's accepted this and written to Ms E to confirm its mistake.

I'm also confirming this in writing, Metro made a mistake when it contacted G and said it would be charging back a payment Ms E had made.

But G, when presented with this chargeback request, had the option to dispute it and give Metro evidence Ms E had willingly made the payment. It seems G didn't do this, and I can't hold Metro responsible for this.

Having not defended the chargeback, it seems G then closed Ms E's account and said it would no longer accept orders from her. Again, I don't think I can hold Metro responsible for G's decisions here.

I'd hope, when G sees the final response letter Metro sent, the investigator's assessment and my decision, all confirming this was Metro's fault, G reopens Ms E's account.

But I can't compel G to do anything, this complaint is against Metro, so I can look at what Metro's done, if I think it made a mistake, and if it did what I think an appropriate level of compensation is.

Ms E says Metro's actions have defamed her, and she's referenced some court cases and awards courts made. But this service isn't a court, and I think a claim for defamation would need to be taken to court.

If Ms E feels Metro's actions have amounted to defamation, I'd suggest she take some legal advice to see what her options are.

Having decided Metro made a mistake, I have to look at what I feel is a fair amount for the distress and inconvenience Ms E experienced. And, like the investigator, I don't feel the impact is as large as Ms E feels it is.

I accept it would be upsetting to have a retailer Ms E uses a lot suddenly close an account, through no fault of hers. But I think this likely could have been resolved by Ms E forwarding Metro's final response to G.

If this didn't, or doesn't, result in Ms E's account being reopened, then I don't think a further letter from Metro, what Ms E wants, would fix this either.

And I don't think Metro's called Ms E a fraudster, or said this to G.

Metro made a mistake, and it's apologised for this in writing, the final response it sent. I know Ms E would like a further, formal and written apology, but I don't think Metro needs to do this.

Metro's already apologised, any further apology is going to be one Metro's been forced to make and I don't think this would count as an apology.

Instead, Metro's apologised by paying Ms E compensation. Metro credited Ms E's account with £100 after it sent her final response.

And Metro then paid Ms E a further £200, in line with the investigator's assessment. I think this was a little hasty, but I don't think this payment was made in an effort to frustrate Ms E's continuation of her complaint.

Metro paying the further £200 doesn't, I think, mean Ms E's complaint is closed or resolved, and I don't think the paying of the money says Ms E's accepted this outcome.

But I think a total payment of £300 is fair. Ms E was clearly distressed by G closing her account. And this decision was a knock-on effect of Metro doing the wrong thing.

But I also think Ms E had an admittance of fault from Metro, which in the circumstances should probably have been enough for G to realise this wasn't Ms E's fault.

I've also not seen anything to say the closure of Ms E's account is permanent, as I've said I'd hope G will reconsider its position following my decision saying this is Metro's fault.

Ms E is, I think, in a position to contact G and present it with enough evidence to show she didn't ask for her payment to be charged back. I accept this is further inconvenience for Ms E, but this is why I don't feel Metro's offer of £200 was enough.

Ms E raised a dSAR with Metro and received it. Ms E says some information is missing. This issue didn't form part of this complaint to Metro, so I can't consider it.

But our general approach is the contents of a dSAR are for the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) to look into, and I know Ms E has already said she'll be contacting the ICO.

As I've said, there's no dispute Metro made an error here and raised a chargeback against a payment to G, but Ms E never disputed this payment. Clearly this error has had a knock-on effect and caused Ms E distress and inconvenience.

I can't punish Metro for its mistakes, but I can direct Metro to pay what I think is a fair amount of compensation. And in the specific circumstances of Ms E's complaint, I think a payment of £300 is fair and reasonable.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is I uphold this complaint, and Metro must pay Ms E a total of £300 in compensation, if it hasn't already done this.

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

Chris Russ  
**Ombudsman**