

## **The complaint**

Mr W has complained that he was unable to use his Guavapay Limited (“Guavapay”) payment card due to issues with his PIN.

Mr W also complained that he referred his son for a Guavapay card but the referral bonus wasn’t paid to him, despite his son setting up a Guavapay account via a referral link sent by Mr W.

## **What happened**

After receiving a new Guavapay card Mr W went to use the card but was unable to do so. Mr W says the payment terminals said he’d exceeded his PIN attempts. Mr W contacted Guavapay on 3 November 2024 to explain that his PIN was not working - Guavapay suggested that Mr W try resetting his PIN.

Mr W referred his son for a Guavapay card. Mr W reached out to Guavapay and explained that neither he nor his son had received a referral bonus.

As Mr W had not received a final response, he referred his complaint to this service. After he did that, Guavapay issued its final response to the complaint on 28 January 2025. In summary it acknowledged that it should’ve recorded a complaint for Mr W in November 2024. It also explained that the referral bonus had been paid on 7 January 2025.

In response, Mr W said that Guavapay had issued its final response outside of the relevant time limits. Mr W also said that the need to reset the PIN on a Guavapay card was not made clear when the card was issued to him. And he says that he’d raised the issue regarding the referral bonus not being paid, and despite Guavapay saying it had paid the bonus, he confirmed he’d still not received it – as the bonus paid on 7 January 2025 was for referring his wife. Guavapay considered matters further and arranged for the referral bonus to be paid to Mr W.

After Mr W had referred his complaint to this service, one of our investigators assessed the complaint and they upheld the complaint. In summary, they thought that Guavapay should pay Mr W £100 for the distress and inconvenience caused by these matters.

As Guavapay didn’t agree with the investigator’s conclusions, the matter was referred for an ombudsman’s 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.

Having reviewed everything, I uphold this complaint for broadly the same reasons that the investigator gave. I will explain why.

Mr W complained that he’d signed up for a Guavapay card but was unable to use it in two different shops – with both payment terminals saying he’d exceeded his PIN attempts.

Guavapay says it has no records of these payment attempts and says that, when Mr W got in contact, it explained that he should reset his PIN to resolve matters but says he refused to do so.

Having considered what both parties have said, it does seem to be the case that Mr W had followed the setting up instructions, and for some reason the PIN number he'd set up on the card didn't work. So I can understand his frustration when he was unable to use his card to make payments.

Guavapay says that if Mr W did try to use the card for payments and was unable to do so, that was likely due to an issue with the payment terminals. However, that doesn't strike me as being particularly plausible, given that Mr W said he'd tried to use his cards in two different shops. Overall, I find it unlikely that the payment terminals in two different shops were both not operating correctly. So given the circumstances, it does seem more likely to me that Mr W was unable to make the payments because of an issue with Guavapay's system. For example, as he'd only just set up the account, I doubt that Mr W would've forgotten his PIN number. Therefore, I think it's fair to say that the inconvenience Mr W experienced was likely caused by Guavapay's systems.

But that being said, when Mr W reached out to Guavapay for support, it did recommend that he reset his PIN. In my view this was reasonable advice to give to help Mr W troubleshoot the issue. But from what I can tell, Mr W was not willing to do that.

Of course, Mr W was free to ignore the advice being given, but equally I can't then hold Guavapay responsible if he continued to experience issues. But in this case, Guavapay has provided evidence that Mr W was able to use his card to successfully pay for something on the following day – on 4 November 2024. So fortunately, it looks like the technical issue that had prevented Mr W from using his card had resolved itself by the following day.

Mr W has also complained that he'd referred his son and wife for Guavapay accounts, but says he only got paid the referral bonus for his wife's referral. Guavapay says that this was likely because Mr W's son failed to follow the referral process. But Mr W said he sent the same link, via a messaging service, to his son and wife and they both clicked on the link to apply for their Guavapay accounts.

Based on the information provided to me, I've not seen enough evidence to say that Mr W's son did something wrong that caused the referral bonus not to be paid to Mr W. I say this because, firstly, I see no reason to doubt Mr W's testimony that he sent the same link out to his son and wife – after all he was clearly keen to receive the bonus being offered. And secondly, I'm sure both Mr W and his son would've been aware that if his son didn't apply for the card via the link, then the referral bonus won't be paid. In my view, I think it's more likely that Mr W's son had clicked on the referral link sent to him by Mr W and that the bonus wasn't paid because Guavapay's systems, for some reason, failed to track that the application was being made via the referral link.

I'm glad to hear that Guavapay has since paid Mr W the referral bonus (for referring his son). But taking everything into account, I don't think the Guavapay got everything right here – due to what seems to likely be glitches within its systems. So overall, based on the fact that Mr W faced more than one issue; that he had to contact Guavapay a number of times to try and get matters resolved; and given the time scales involved; and the inconvenience caused to him, I do think the £100 compensation recommended by the investigator is fair in the circumstances.

**Putting things right**

To put things right, I require Guavapay to pay Mr W £100 for the distress and inconvenience caused to him by this matter.

**My final decision**

Because of the reasons given above, I uphold this complaint and require Guavapay Limited to do what I have outlined above to put matters right, in full and final settlement of this complaint.

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

Thomas White  
**Ombudsman**