

## **The complaint**

Miss A complains that TSB Bank plc (“TSB”) cancelled her debit card without any notice when it said it wouldn’t and have failed to send her out a new card after it said it would.

## **What happened**

Miss A is living abroad on a temporary basis. Following reporting an unauthorised withdrawal from her account TSB cancelled Miss A’s debit card. Miss A says she was initially told in September 2024 that TSB would send a replacement card, but this was never received. Miss A chased TSB about this via live chat on her banking app and was told on 2 October that TSB can either issue her card to her UK address or update her address to that she holds abroad which would take 2-3 working days and that once this was done Miss A could contact it to order a new card. Despite doing as instructed TSB didn’t send Miss A her card.

TSB’s records show a replacement card was ordered on 27 December 2024 and Miss A was advised that the card would arrive at her local branch to be sent to her manually as the card ordered previously didn’t arrive at her local branch. Miss A continued to chase TSB through mainly chat due to international calls being expensive but has never received the card.

Unfortunately, TSB is unable to send Miss A the card as she is currently abroad in an embargoed country and so Miss A’s replacement card has been sent to Miss A’s local branch of TSB in the UK for her to collect when she’s back.

Miss A is unhappy about the service she has received by TSB in both the cancellation of her card and the issuing of a replacement card. Miss A says she was told that she had the option to freeze and unfreeze her card rather than have it cancelled and that being without a card for so long has caused her much distress and inconvenience as she isn’t able to transact in the way she wishes without having the physical card with the long number and 3 digit security number.

Miss A says TSB have continually lied to her saying it would send a card when it didn’t and wasted her time advising her to update her address and phone number when it wouldn’t send a card to the country she is currently residing. Miss A says she has had to continually chase TSB over this issue and that TSB has dismissed her concerns.

TSB says that when Miss A reported the unauthorised withdrawal her card was automatically cancelled because the card details are potentially in someone else’s hand and so it could have been used again. TSB says its terms and conditions advise that its customers must be a resident of the UK and that its conversational banking wouldn’t have taken into account embargoed countries and assumed the card was being sent to a UK address when Miss A was told that the card would be sent out.

One of our investigators looked into Miss A’s concerns and although they agreed that the cancelling of her debit card was reasonable in the circumstances and that TSB couldn’t send her card to her abroad, they thought the service and communications about this from TSB had been poor. To put things right they thought TSB should compensate Miss A £200 for the distress and inconvenience caused.

Miss A was dissatisfied with this as she doesn't believe the compensation is enough and has asked 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.

I hope that Miss A won't take it as a discourtesy that I've condensed her complaint in the way that I have. While I have carefully reviewed all Miss A and TSB's submissions, I don't see the merit in repeating them here. Ours is an informal dispute resolution service, and I've concentrated on what I consider to be the crux of the complaint. Our rules allow me to do that. And the crux of Miss A's outstanding complaint point is regarding the service received by TSB when it cancelled her card and failed to send her a new one.

It might be helpful for me to say here that, I don't have the power to tell TSB how it needs to run its business and I can't make TSB change its systems or policies – such as the actions taken when a fraud is reported or where and to who it issues its debit cards. These are commercial decisions and not something for me to get involved with. Nor can I say what procedures TSB needs to have in place to meet its regulatory obligations. We offer an informal dispute resolution service and we have no regulatory or disciplinary role.

That said I don't think it was unreasonable for it to cancel Miss A's debit card when she reported an unauthorised withdrawal as Miss A's money was at risk and as I'm sure Miss A appreciates TSB have a duty to safeguard its customers financial affairs and take appropriate measures against fraud. I accept TSB couldn't have just applied a freeze to Miss A's card, but given the circumstances I don't think the action TSB took in cancelling the card is unreasonable.

And nor do I don't think it unreasonable that TSB won't send a replacement card to an embargoed country, this is to protect both TSB and Miss A's interests and in-line with its regulatory obligations.

But I'm in agreement with our investigator that the service Miss A received from TSB – in particular the communications regarding this issue has been poor. Miss A has been given conflicting information about the issuing of a replacement card, resulting in her being let down when her card doesn't arrive as expected and having to chase TSB to no avail. And despite explaining to TSB that she wasn't in the UK TSB's systems failed to recognise this and repeatedly made inappropriate suggestions for accessing her money and left conversations mid-chat.

TSB should've made it clear to Miss A at the outset that it couldn't send a replacement card to her while she was abroad. Because TSB didn't do this Miss A wasted time and money chasing TSB through her app and making international phone calls. And so I agree that some compensation is warranted here, and I think £200 is fair and in-line with what we'd recommend in situations such as this.

Given the impact not having her card has had Miss A doesn't believe this compensation is enough. But although I accept that Miss A is still without a card and is unable to make certain transactions - and I appreciate this is inconvenient for her - I can't say that TSB has done anything wrong in not sending the card to her, as this is as stated above in-line with its regulatory obligations and its terms and conditions. And ultimately the outcome wouldn't be any different had TSB told her it couldn't send the card to her whilst abroad at the outset – as she would still be without the card.

Furthermore, I've seen no evidence of any financial loss as a result of TSB's poor communications and as such I'm not persuaded an uplift on the £200 compensation as recommended by our investigator would be fair. And so it follows that I uphold Miss A's complaint and direct TSB to compensate Miss A £200.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is I uphold Miss A's complaint and direct TSB Bank plc to pay Miss A £200 compensation.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss A to accept or reject my decision before 14 October 2025.

Caroline Davies  
**Ombudsman**