

The complaint

Mr B complains Barclays Bank UK PLC hasn't refunded him for a cash machine withdrawal he made but didn't receive the money.

What happened

Mr B received his wages on 31 January 2025 and went to a cash machine to withdraw £500, in two £250 transactions. Mr B says the first withdrawal was fine but when he attempted the second one the screen said he'd reached his daily limit.

Mr B's daily limit is more than £250, and he often takes £500 at a time. Mr B then took £250 the next day.

On 6 February 2025 Barclays debited a further £250, with the reference 31 January. Barclays says this is the second withdrawal Mr B attempted on the day, it was successful but then posted late to Mr B's account.

Mr B called Barclays to complain and he was given some poor information about why this payment had left his account. Mr B said he hadn't received the second £250, but Barclays didn't raise a cash machine dispute.

Instead, it responded to his complaint and apologised for the poor information Mr B was given and paid him £100. But Barclays wouldn't refund the £250, it was satisfied Mr B had withdrawn the money.

Unhappy with this response, Mr B brought his complaint to this service. An investigator looked into things and asked Barclays to raise a dispute.

The investigator got some conflicting and incomplete information from the cash machine owner, and thought, on balance, Mr B hadn't got the second £250.

The investigator said Barclays should refund Mr B £250 and 8% interest. Mr B agreed, but Barclays didn't. Barclays said the evidence suggested Mr B made two successful withdrawals of £250, there were two different authorisation codes.

And Barclays said the withdrawals were in line with Mr B's usual pattern of taking money from cash machines.

Barclays 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.

Where evidence is incomplete or contradictory, where it is here, I can reach a decision on

the balance of probabilities, what I think is more likely to have happened.

When Mr B used the cash machine on 31 January 2025 Barclays was having an IT outage. The IT outage affected different people in different ways, but it seems Mr B was mostly able to use his account as he normally does.

But the IT outage clearly affected the second withdrawal, even though it was authorised it didn't debit Mr B's account or, apparently, adjust his balance straight away.

Instead, the second £250 was debited from Mr B's account a week later. This isn't the usual way cash machine withdrawals are done, generally they debit the account straight away.

I think the starting point for this complaint is Mr B's withdrawal was affected by Barclays' IT outage, and I think this means the burden is on Barclays to prove Mr B received the money.

Barclays raised a dispute and contacted the cash machine owner. The owner sent Barclays what it says is the journal roll. But I don't think this is the journal roll, it seems to be entries on a spreadsheet, and the entries are out of line.

Reading across the line for Mr B's first withdrawal it says he was issued ten, what appears to be, £10 notes. This can't be right, Mr B says the first withdrawal was completed properly, so I'm satisfied Mr B received £250.

This means the journal roll isn't the most persuasive evidence, it's obviously incorrect and it's likely been manually added to a spreadsheet. And the cash machine owner initially said Mr B had received 25 £20 notes for each withdrawal, which again is clearly wrong.

Although the cash machine owner later corrected itself and said it meant to say 25 £10 notes, it means the evidence isn't the most persuasive.

Barclays says there were two different authorisation codes for each withdrawal, and I agree its records say this. But I can also see, on the same excerpt of its records, Mr B's balance before the transactions.

The first balance is £2,342.46, the second one, after a £250 withdrawal, is £2,350.12. Mr B didn't receive more money on 31 January 2025, so I'm unsure how, after a £250 withdrawal, Mr B's balance increased.

I think it's clear there were further issues from the IT outage in not recording Mr B's balance correctly. This means it's difficult for me to say with certainty these screens are correct.

I don't think I can fairly rely on these screens, some of the information is incorrect. To accept what Barclays says about the authorisation codes, I'd need to discount some of the information on the screen, the balances, and then accept the rest of the information.

Whilst this might be reasonable to do in some specific circumstances, I'm also being asked to do the same for the cash machine owner's evidence.

The cash machine owner admits it's made errors, specifically typos, but I'm then expected to accept the rest of its submissions as fact. I don't think this is fair, the evidence I have is incomplete and parts clearly have errors.

The cash machine owner's also not sent anything to show the machine balanced, other than someone confirming it did, and there's no purge bin records. The purge bin takes notes that

weren't dispensed, but I can't be sure this was empty.

If the machine had a fault, or a problem with Mr B's withdrawal, it's likely notes would have gone to the purge bin, but I don't have evidence either way.

Overall, I think the cash machine owner's submissions are incomplete and, in part, incorrect, as I think are Barclays' internal records. I think it's then difficult for me to then rely on these records as proof Mr B received money from the cash machine.

Barclays says Mr B's pattern of withdrawals is he often takes £500 in two £250 withdrawals, and this is correct. I've looked back on Mr B's statements, and forward from January 2025.

Barclays is right when it says Mr B often carries out two transactions on the day he's paid, or very soon after. Mr B took a further £250 on 1 February 2025, I assume to make up for the £250 he didn't receive the day before.

I've not seen Mr B take £750 across two days before, or after this withdrawal. On 1 February 2025 Mr B didn't know the £250 was due to debit his account, it wasn't showing.

I think it's more likely Mr B took a further £250 on 1 February 2025 as he didn't receive the money the day before. And Mr B had no need to report the cash machine withdrawal prior to it being debited, he didn't receive the money and it didn't show on his account.

I think there are three likely scenarios for this second withdrawal. One is the money was given to Mr B and he's lied when he said he didn't receive it. I don't think this is likely, it doesn't seem Mr B's made this kind of claim before and he took £250 the next day.

And Mr B's been consistent in what he's said to Barclays and this service.

Another alternative is the money was dispensed but Mr B walked away and someone else took it. But Mr B uses cash machines regularly, I think it's unlikely he walked off without the money, and his testimony is the machine said it couldn't complete the transaction.

The other alternative is the machine didn't issue the money to Mr B.

On balance, I think this is the most likely scenario. And I don't think anything Barclays or the cash machine owner's sent in persuades me, on balance, the money was dispensed.

This is a balanced decision, and I can understand why Barclays feels the evidence says Mr B successfully withdrew the second £250. But, looking at all the evidence and Mr B's consistent testimony, I'm not persuaded the cash machine issued the second £250.

Because of this, I think Barclays needs to refund Mr B the second £250 withdrawal. And since Mr B's been deprived of this money, it should pay 8% simple interest on the money from the date it was debited to the date it's refunded.

I think the £100 Barclays has already paid is fair compensation for the inconvenience Mr B's been caused by the poor information he was told and by Barclays not raising a cash machine dispute sooner than it did.

My final decision

My final decision is I uphold this complaint, and Barclays should pay Mr B £250 for what I think was a failed cash machine withdrawal, and 8% simple interest from the date it debited to the date of settlement.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr B to accept or reject my decision before 3 September 2025.

Chris Russ
Ombudsman