

The complaint

Mr W complains that Barclays Bank UK PLC kept blocking his payments he attempted to make on his mobile payment service.

What happened

Mr W had his debit card stolen while abroad on 15 June 2025. He called Barclays to advise it and froze the card on the app. The fraudulent payments amounted to £278. On returning to the UK, he spoke to Barclays Fraud Team. When Barclays advised him of the payments, the list consisted of a number of foreign payees and he confirmed he hadn't made those payments. It later transpired that one of those payments had been made by him at the airport, using Google Pay

Mr W complained that his new card which was registered to Google Pay on 18 June, kept being delisted, and his payments were blocked. And when he called Barclays about it, it reinstated the card and approved the payments. After some investigation Barclays explained that the payment on Google Pay which had been listed as fraudulent had caused its fraud detection system to flag the phone itself as a risky device.

Barclays' advisers arranged to have a new card issued, saying that once he'd received the physical new card, the problem would be resolved. In the meantime, he was without any means of payment. But even once the new card arrived, Mr W still had problems with payments he tried to make using his phone being blocked.

Mr W advised that he had spent many hours on the phone with Barclays trying to sort the matter out and that he had suffered numerous embarrassing incidents when he couldn't pay for things.

Barclays explained that the card kept being delisted from Mr W's Google Wallet, due to the way its fraud prevention system monitored his account. But it didn't agree it had made any error. However, when he contacted it in July 2025, it had promised that it would remove any blocks on his device and that this would fix the issue. This shouldn't have been promised and it was sorry for the inconvenience and frustration this caused. It credited Mr W's account with £50. It has noted that since 11 August 2025, Mr W has been able to use Google Pay successfully. So the problem appears now to be resolved.

Mr W didn't accept the compensation payment and demanded that Barclays remove the credit.

On referral to the Financial Ombudsman Service our Investigator said Mr W had mistakenly included the genuine payment in the list of fraudulent payments, which led to the series of issues further down the line with his mobile device and Google Pay. So, he didn't think Barclays was responsible for the consequential issues Mr W faced.

Mr W said that the crux is not what caused the issue but the erroneous "we've fixed it" aftermath that created over eight hours interactions, ruined a family holiday and caused untold issues. He also reported the loss via his Barclays App on his phone, so any

reasonable individual would not then anticipate Barclays would include a payment made by phone through Google Pay on the fraud list.

The matter has been referred to me for an Ombudsman's consideration.

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've considered first of all the Inclusion of the Google Pay transaction in the list of fraudulent payments and whether Barclays was responsible for this error. I understand that Mr W reported the theft of the card and froze it on the app. However, he was subsequently in contact with Barclays over the telephone when the details of the fraudulent payments were available. In that phone call he particularly identified the payment made by Google Pay as fraudulent. I can understand why he did this as the fraudulent payments were all small payments and this payment seemed to be similar. It's not immediately obvious on the statements that this was a Google Pay payment rather than by card.

So I can't say that Barclays could have been expected to identify this payment as genuine or indeed made through Google Pay. In respect to the calls he made around this time, I understand that this took up a lot of his time, but as the problem wasn't immediately obvious then Barclays fraud team had to look back through the payments to identify why the card kept delisting from Google Pay.

As regards subsequent attempts to resolve the matter I can see it was thought that once the new physical card was in Mr W's possession, the problem would be resolved. However although not all payments through the phone were blocked, the card did continue to be delisted from Google Pay leading to several long phone calls to unblock the payment. Mr W also referred to an incident at the airport when he tried to pay for a hired car, and on other occasions when he needed to pay for a staff meal and when he wanted to pay for a hired taxi.

All the difficulties were traced back to the payment being mistakenly included in the fraud claim. My view is that it was genuinely thought that the problem had been resolved, but Barclays fraud detection system apparently continued to alert large payments as possible fraud. So in my view Barclays' advisers or its fraud team couldn't be said to be at fault. It appears that after a few such transactions, Google Pay started to work properly.

I fully understand that Mr W spent a long time on the phone to various advisers, and that at one stage he was told the problem would be resolved. I think because this was a difficult problem the adviser could have been more cautious. Though bearing in mind that this concerned the automated system it wasn't unreasonable to expect going through various processes like cancelling and re-registering the card might have worked.

Mr W told Barclays he didn't have credit cards, or any other bank account. However there was no problem with his using the physical card once it had been reissued, so the problem only affected using his phone to pay.

So taking into account that the problems Mr W had largely arose out of the error in including a genuine payment amongst the fraudulent ones, and the difficulties in identifying and sorting out this unusual case, I think the payment offered by Barclays was reasonable.

My final decision

Barclays has already made an offer to pay £50 to settle the complaint and I think this offer is fair in all the circumstances.

So my decision is that Barclays Bank UK PLC should pay £50.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr W to accept or reject my decision before 12 January 2026.

Ray Lawley
Ombudsman