

The complaint

Miss B is unhappy TSB Bank plc blocked her debit card after unauthorised transactions occurred on her account.

What happened

The background to this complaint is well known to both parties, so I'll provide only a brief summary here.

Miss B is unhappy that following unauthorised transactions on her account, TSB blocked her debit card. She says this prevented her from having access to her funds and caused her inconvenience. Miss B is looking for compensation for this.

TSB explained it cancelled the card in line with its process following Miss B's reports of debit card fraud. It also said Miss B repeatedly went into branch to withdraw funds after her card was blocked – so it's satisfied Miss B had access to her funds. It doesn't think it acted unfairly.

Our Investigator concluded that TSB acted fairly and referenced the account terms which allow TSB to block the card where it is worried about the security of the card. Given that Miss B had unauthorised transactions on her account which appear to be linked to her debit card – she was satisfied TSB fairly applied the account terms to Miss B's situation.

Miss B didn't accept the Investigator's view. This case has been passed to me for a final decision.

What I've decided – and why

I've summarised the complaint in my own words. No courtesy is intended by this. Our rules allow me to do this given the informal nature of our service. If there's something I've not mentioned, it isn't because I've ignored it. Rather, I'm satisfied I only need to focus on the key points to reach what I think is the right outcome.

I've considered all the available evidence and arguments to decide what's fair and reasonable in the circumstances of this complaint.

Having done so I agree with the Investigator for broadly the same reasons.

I'm sorry that Miss B experienced transactions on her account that she didn't authorise, and I'm pleased these have since been refunded. While the inconvenience suffered ultimately stems from the individual who made those transactions, TSB still has a duty to treat her fairly.

I've considered the terms and conditions of the account, as they set out what both TSB and Miss B agreed to and set out some of the circumstances where TSB can stop Miss B's card. The terms say:

“When can we stop you using your card or security details?

We don't want to do this, but there are some reasons why we can stop you using your card or security details. We can do either of these if:

- We're worried about the security of your card or security details
- We think your card or security details are being used by someone else or are at risk of being used by someone else
- We think fraud is happening on your account”

I don't think TSB acted contrary to the terms of the account by stopping the card, given it would have been reasonably worried Miss B's security details had been compromised. Issuing a new debit card would also help secure the account as it is possible it was the debit card details that were compromised. So, I don't think TSB acted unreasonably by taking this step. TSB has also said that the disputed transactions reported by Miss B involved her debit card which further persuades me that its decision to replace Miss B's card wasn't unreasonable.

Miss B has said she had difficulty in accessing her funds while waiting for a new debit card to be issued. She has explained that her TSB account was her main account. I've no doubt that Miss B was inconvenienced by not having access to a functioning debit card, however TSB's internal notes show that Miss B was able to go into branch and withdraw funds. And I can see that there are TSB branches relatively close to the address our service has for Miss B. TSB also said that Miss B would have been able to access funds using digital services.

After carefully considering all the information given, I'm not persuaded that TSB has acted unfairly by cancelling and reissuing Miss B with a new debit card. So I'm not recommending it compensates Miss B for the inconvenience suffered because of this.

My final decision

My final decision is that I don't not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss B to accept or reject my decision before 19 December 2025.

Sureeni Weerasinghe
Ombudsman