

The complaint

Mr A complains FORISGFS UK LIMITED trading as Crypto.com unfairly blocked his visa debit card.

What happened

Mr A held a Crypto.com app account. With this account Mr A was provided with a Crypto.com visa card. This operates as a prepaid card, which can be topped up via the Crypto.com app with cash or crypto funds.

Crypto.com suspended Mr A's card on 23 March 2021, in line with the account terms and its regulatory duties. Mr A queried the ongoing suspension, and on 19 August 2024 he raised a formal complaint about the action taken by Crypto.com and lack of information provided to him. Crypto.com explained that it was acting in line with its legal and regulatory duties and it wouldn't be able to provide a timeframe for when the card would be unblocked.

Unhappy, Mr A referred his complaint to this service. An Investigator gathered the relevant evidence and in summary, made the followings findings:

- Crypto.com acted fairly in blocking Mr A's card as it has legal and regulatory obligations that it must adhere to.
- Crypto.com isn't obliged to give Mr A a specific reason for its decision to restrict the card.
- The information provided to this service in confidence shows that the card has been fairly restricted.
- The issues surrounding his crypto currencies are outside of this service's jurisdiction.

Mr A remained unhappy and maintained Crypto.com failed to provide any meaningful information about the restriction of his card. As no agreement could be reached, the case has been referred to me – an ombudsman – for a final 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 appreciate Mr A was disappointed by the Investigator's opinion. I'd like to reassure Mr A that I've considered the whole file and what's she's said. But I'll concentrate my comments on what I think is relevant. If I don't mention any specific point, it's not because I failed to take it on board and think about it, but because I don't think I need to comment on it to reach what I think is a fair and reasonable outcome. No discourtesy is intended by me in taking this approach.

I'll start by setting out some context for the review and restriction of Mr A's card. UK legislation places extensive obligations on regulated financial businesses. Financial institutions must establish the purpose and intended nature of transactions as well as the origin of funds, and there may be penalties if they don't. This applies to both new and

existing relationships. These obligations override all other obligations. In Mr A's case I'm satisfied Crypto.com was complying with these obligations when it reviewed and suspended Mr A's visa debit card.

I would add too that our rules allow us to receive evidence in confidence. We may treat evidence from banks as confidential for a number of reasons – for example, if it contains security information, or commercially sensitive information. Some of the information Crypto.com has provided is information that we considered should be kept confidential. This means I haven't been able to share a lot of detail with Mr A, but this information is key in determining Mr A's complaint. So, I must consider it carefully when making a determination.

Mr A's account terms and conditions also allow Crypto.com to block the card in specific circumstances. I understand Mr A's frustration with the block, and I don't doubt it would've had a detrimental impact on him, especially given the debit card had a balance on it. But I consider the block to be necessary to ensure Crypto.com was able to comply with its regulatory requirements.

A key issue for Mr A is that Crypto.com hasn't provided a clear reason for its actions. I understand the card has been blocked for many years now – and I understand Mr A's frustration with the lack of access to the funds. But the evidence provided by Crypto.com in confidence demonstrates a clear and legitimate reason for its decision to take this action. Crypto.com is under no obligation to provide Mr A with specific reasons for the actions it is taking, as much as Mr A would like to know, and I can't compel it to disclose this information. Further, in order to meet its legal and regulatory obligations Crypto.com will have clear guidance and processes in place when it restricts a card in this manner. Within the information Crypto.com has disclosed in confidence I can see it has adhered to this, and I consider its actions to be appropriate.

Another key issue for Mr A is the lack of timeframe provided, and he says he would be happy for the account to be closed down and his funds released. I understand Mr A's concerns, but reviews of this nature do not have a prescriptive timeframe. The impact of an account block can be serious, so there is a general expectation that any review is carried out promptly. Based on the timeline provided by Crypto.com, I can't see that it has caused any avoidable delays in its review. So I won't be directing Crypto.com to unblock the card or close it down and release funds to Mr A. I'm satisfied the action it is taking is in keeping with its legal duties.

I'm sorry this isn't the outcome Mr A hoped for, and I know he will be disappointed with the decision I've reached, but I hope it provides some clarity around why I won't be asking Crypto.com to take any further action or compensate Mr A.

My final decision

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

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr A to accept or reject my decision before 19 February 2026.

Chandni Green
Ombudsman