

The complaint

Miss B complains that Lloyds Bank PLC hasn't explained why she wasn't able to make certain contactless payments with her debit card.

What happened

Miss B made two contactless payments on board a plane in August 2025. Both payments went through at the time. Though when Miss B later checked her account, she found that the second payment, for £29, had been declined and the statement set out that "a limit has been reached". And that the airline had made three further attempts to take the payment. She tried to contact Lloyds the following Monday but its customer service line was closed. She says she then made further successful contactless payments, but when she tried to make a further such payment for £13.43, she couldn't make it until she entered her PIN.

Miss B tells us she contacted Lloyds who initially said her card might have been blocked and transferred her to the fraud department. But it wasn't able to explain why she'd been unable to make certain payments.

Lloyds explained in its final response letter in September 2025, that Miss B's contactless payments had reached the cumulative limit, which meant that she wasn't able to make contactless payments over £10 until she entered her PIN. When she attempted to make the next payment over £10, she was prompted to enter the PIN and this successfully reset the limit and allowed the payment to the airline to go through. Lloyds agreed however that she had received poor customer service during her initial phone call and paid £100 compensation.

Our Investigator was satisfied Lloyds had been able to explain the situation and handled the complaint fairly. It had acknowledged service failures by initially not being able to clarify things and awarded £100 redress which our Investigator felt was fair.

Miss B felt that Lloyds hadn't adequately explained the position and that there had been an error which needed to be sorted out.

The matter has been passed 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 don't think that Lloyds made an error in respect of the contactless payments in this case. I shall explain why.

Contactless cards have two limits – the payment limit which is usually £100 (unless this is reduced by the customer). And a cumulative limit which means that once contactless payments added up together reach a certain limit (I'm not sure what that is in Miss B's case) then the customer is prompted to enter their PIN and the limit is reset.

If this is not done, then contactless payments for over £10 will continue to be declined until the PIN is entered. So, after the payment to the airline was declined for reaching the limit, Miss B was able to make further individual contactless payments for less than £10. When she next made a payment over £10, she was prompted to enter her PIN and I understand this successfully reset the limit. So, as this appears to me to be part of the normal process for contactless payments, I don't think there was any error here on Lloyds' part.

In respect of the original payment of £29 Miss B queries why this was allowed to go through on the plane. I think that's because payments on board are offline which means the airline won't request payment from the customer's bank until they land and the system goes online. That's why I think Miss B wasn't prompted at the time to enter her PIN. That would be a matter for the airline – I don't think Lloyds was responsible for that.

In respect of customer service, I think that as there was a straightforward explanation, Miss B should have been told this rather than having to be transferred to the fraud department and kept on the line. In respect of this Lloyds has paid Miss B £100. I think that was a fair and reasonable payment, in the circumstances of this matter.

My final decision

I don't uphold the complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss B to accept or reject my decision before 11 December 2025.

Ray Lawley
Ombudsman