

The complaint

Mr M complains J.P Morgan Europe Limited trading as Chase unfairly blocked his bank account, which caused him distress and inconvenience.

Mr M has a representative on this complaint, but I will refer to Mr M directly in this decision.

What happened

Mr M held a Chase account and on 21 May 2025 Chase blocked the account to carry out a review. This restriction ended on 4 June 2025.

Mr M raised a formal complaint regarding Chase's decision to block his account, explaining it was having a significant impact on him, and it hadn't provided reasons for this action. In its final response letter dated 1 July 2025 Chase explained that the account was reviewed by its specialist team, and that although it may have caused Mr M difficulty the account terms and conditions state it can block the account in specific circumstances. Chase accepted the service it provided should've been better as it didn't inform Mr M the block had been removed. Chase confirmed the account was fully functional again.

Mr M remained unhappy and referred his complaint to this service. In his referral Mr M explained his account was blocked with no explanation and he had to be supported by his mother during the account block. Mr M wanted an explanation about the action Chase took and a fair and just outcome, which compensates him for the impact of Chase's actions.

An Investigator reviewed Mr M's concerns, and initially due to a lack of evidence from Chase the complaint was upheld. This awarded Mr M compensation and interest on the funds in his account which he was deprived access to. However, following the review Chase provided further evidence which the Investigator considered, and this resulted in them issuing revised findings. These findings, in summary, found:

- Banks can block and review accounts, but they need to do so in line with the account terms.
- We can't give Mr M the reasons for the review and account block.
- Chase acted fairly in reviewing the account and in line with its legal and regulatory obligations.
- Chase conducted its review in a timely manner.
- Mr M experienced inconvenience, but this isn't something Chase needs to compensate Mr M for.

Mr M disagreed with the review and reiterated his key complaint points. 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.

Firstly, I am sorry to see Mr M has had cause for complaint. I'd like to reassure Mr M that I've considered the whole file and what's he'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.

As a UK financial business, Chase is strictly regulated and must take certain actions in order to meet its legal and regulatory obligations. It's also required to carry out ongoing monitoring of an existing business relationship. This includes establishing the purpose and intended nature of transactions as well as the origin of funds, and there may be penalties if they don't. That sometimes means Chase needs to restrict, or in some cases go as far as closing, customers' accounts.

In Mr M's case Chase restricted Mr M's personal account with immediate effect. The terms and conditions of Mr M's account allow Chase to do this in specific circumstances. Chase has explained and given me information to show why it reviewed and blocked Mr M's account. Having carefully considered this, I'm satisfied Chase took these actions in line with the obligations it must adhere to.

I know Mr M would like a detailed explanation as to why Chase took these actions. But Chase isn't under any obligation to provide this. I would add too that our rules allow us to receive evidence in confidence. We may treat evidence from regulated businesses' as confidential for a number of reasons – for example, if it contains security information, or commercially sensitive information. Some of the information Chase has provided is information we consider should be kept confidential. However, I can assure the evidence provided shows that Chase acted in line with the account terms and its regulatory obligations when it reviewed the account.

Mr M says Chase's decision to restrict his personal account caused him significant distress and inconvenience. Mr M says he had to rely on his mother who was a pensioner for funds during the account block, and this was highly inappropriate. I do appreciate this matter would've caused him some difficulty, but this was necessary given the nature of Chase's review. I understand the lack of timeframe for the review has added to Mr M's frustration, but there is no set timeframe in place for reviews of this nature. The impact of an account restriction can be significant, so this service would expect Chase to carry out the review in a timely manner. Based on the timeline provided to me by Chase, I am satisfied it acted promptly and without undue delay. Chase does accept it should've informed Mr M promptly when the account was unblocked, and it has acknowledged this shortcoming. I consider this sufficient in the circumstances of Mr M's complaint.

I know this will not be the outcome Mr M was hoping for, but I am satisfied Chase acted reasonably in taking action to discharge its regulatory obligation. I know Mr M will be disappointed with the decision I've reached, but I hope it provides some clarity around why I won't be asking Chase to take any further action or compensate Mr M.

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 M to accept or reject my decision before 13 January 2026.

Chandni Green
Ombudsman