

The complaint

Mr K complains that Western Union Payment Services GB Limited (Western Union) unfairly caused him to be charged following two money transfers. He stated he had made payments like this previously with no charges and was not advised these charges would occur.

What happened

Mr K used his credit card to make two money transfers to a bank account in August 2025. Following these transfers, he was charged a fee for each of these transactions by his credit card provider.

Mr K made a complaint to Western Union following this, asking for clarity as he had previously made transfers in the same way using the same card without charges. Western Union advised the transaction was a money transfer, and it is the card issuer who applies any charges.

Mr K remained unhappy with this response, so he brought his complaint to our service, and an investigator reviewed the complaint. The investigator agreed with the outcome provided by Western Union, having reviewed the charges and the evidence provided, including the legal disclaimer on the transaction page.

The investigator also followed up on Mr K's response to their view, explaining Merchant Category Codes (MCC) and that Western Union do not have control over charges applied by a credit card provider.

Mr K was unhappy with this outcome and asked for an ombudsman to decide things.

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 know this will come as a disappointment to Mr K, but I'm not upholding his complaint.

When Mr K made the money transfers, Western Union says a legal disclaimer is displayed when processing the transaction. This states:

'If you're using a credit card, a card-issuer cash advance fee and associated interest charges may apply. To avoid these fees or for reduced fees, use a debit card or check other payment methods.'

Western Union's website contains further information on sending money with a credit card, confirming fees and interest rates may apply and it is important to check these with the credit card provider.

Mr K states he has made similar transactions previously using the same credit card and to the same account, and I understand why Mr K has raised concerns with this.

Western Union says the last transfer Mr K made with his credit card, prior to those in August 2025, was August 2023. Whilst he may not have been charged in the past, my decision is about the two transactions Mr K made in August 2025 and whether Western Union have acted fairly and reasonably in respect of these transactions.

I have reviewed the transaction details, and I consider both payments to be a cash payment. Money has been transferred from a credit card to a bank account.

Since I think both payments should be treated as cash payments, I don't think Western Union's done anything wrong in telling Mr K's credit card provider they were cash or cash equivalent payments.

During the transactions, I am satisfied Western Union have made Mr K aware that fees and charges may occur if using a credit card.

Western Union have notified the credit card provider that these are cash payments using an MCC code. I am unable to verify whether a different code has been used in the past, but it seems the correct code has been used on this occasion, and the credit card provider have charged accordingly.

I think Western Union have met their obligation in notifying Mr K about any associated charges.

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 K to accept or reject my decision before 19 March 2026.

Hannah Edmondson
Ombudsman