

The complaint

Mr B is unhappy with how American Express Services Europe Limited handled his fraud claim.

What happened

In February 2025 Mr B became aware of a £48 payment that he didn't recognise. He reported this to Amex. While Amex did reimburse the payment, Mr B is unhappy with how Amex handled the matter. Mr B says he received inadequate and confusing communication. He doesn't think Amex took the risk seriously enough and says this meant he was stressed and he spent unnecessary time following up on the matter.

Amex didn't uphold Mr B's complaint; it said it refunded Mr B and the letter he received was in relation to the chargeback raised before he reported the payment as fraud.

When Mr B referred his complaint to our service, the investigator didn't uphold it. They concluded Amex could have been more proactive in cancelling Mr B's card and Amex's communication caused some confusion, but they didn't think a compensatory award was required in the circumstances.

Mr B didn't agree, he said he'd wasted time and found it stressful dealing with the matter. Including following up directly with the merchant as he was concerned about how his card information had been compromised. Mr B is self-employed and so he says the time he spent on this did have a financial impact on him.

As an agreement couldn't be reached, the matter has been passed to me for consideration by an ombudsman.

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.

Having done so I'm not upholding this complaint for similar reasons to the investigator.

It appears that when Mr B first contacted Amex in its chat function about the payment he didn't recognise it raised a chargeback. Amex didn't offer to cancel Mr B's card because it was treating it as a payment dispute rather than fraud. But it did cancel and replace the card when Mr B said he thought this was compromised. When Mr B called and spoke to the fraud team it raised a fraud claim and reimbursed the payment. Amex then wrote to Mr B about the chargeback not being valid without confirming with the same clarity that the fraud claim was accepted.

When Mr B contacted Amex again in the chat in March 2025, it confirmed the credit had been made and it was treated as fraud. Amex also clarified the above in a further call that month and apologised for the parallel claims.

I appreciate Amex did cause some confusion here and ideally would have treated it as a

fraud claim in the first place, but overall, I don't think Amex needs to do anything more to put matters right.

Our service isn't a regulator and so doesn't penalise businesses or set their procedures. I've considered whether it acted reasonably in relation to Mr B's fraud claim and I think it did. Amex reimbursed Mr B on the same day that he reported the payment and replaced his card.

I understand that Mr B would have liked Amex to be more proactive, but the reality is that his card was cancelled the same day as he reported the matter. And it provided clarity quickly when Mr B contacted it for an update.

Some inconvenience can be expected when fraud occurs on an account and for our service to make an award we'd need to see that the impact of a business's mistake was more than someone would expect to experience as part of everyday life. Here the confusion was cleared up quickly when Mr B queried it.

I appreciate Mr B likely did spend time on the matter. And while I can understand why he did this, it was his choice to reach out to the merchant directly. I wouldn't have expected Amex to be able to confirm with certainty how Mr B's card information was compromised or identify a suspect.

For these reasons, I don't think Amex needs to pay Mr B compensation in the circumstances.

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 B to accept or reject my decision before 17 March 2026.

Stephanie Mitchell
Ombudsman