

The complaint

Mr W has complained about how Barclays Bank UK Plc (Barclays) handled a refund claim he made.

What happened

Mr W used his Barclays debit card to book a hotel stay in February 2025 for £149.00. However, he had to subsequently cancel the booking and when he didn't receive his refund soon after, he contacted Barclays to raise a chargeback claim.

Unfortunately this resulted in a crossover where Mr W received a hotel refund on 5 March 2025 which was the same time that Barclays raised the chargeback for him. This meant Mr W received a temporary credit for this sum while his claim was investigated.

Mr W raised this with Barclays on 7 March 2025 as he had been refunded twice. He was told he would be re-debited later when the claim process had ended. This was confirmed to him again in July 2025 in writing when the claim was declined and that the funds would be taken in 14 days. This subsequently put Mr W's account into an unarranged overdraft which he says meant he then ran into financial difficulties.

Mr W says he was unhappy with the time taken for the refund to be re-debited and therefore Barclays' administration of his refund claim. As the matter remained unresolved with Barclays after his subsequent complaint to them, he brought his complaint to this service to consider.

Our investigator also agreed that Barclays hadn't done anything wrong here and that Mr W was adequately made aware that he would be re-debited once the chargeback investigation had concluded. As Mr W didn't agree, he asked for an ombudsman to issue a final decision on the matter

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've read and considered the evidence submitted by the parties but won't comment on it all – only the matters I consider to be central to this complaint. This isn't intended as a discourtesy but reflects my role in resolving disputes informally.

It's important to note that Barclays aren't the provider of the services here – so in deciding what is fair and reasonable, I'm looking at their particular role as a provider of financial services. In doing so I note that because Mr W paid for this transaction using a Barclays debit card, a chargeback claim could've helped him. So in deciding what is fair and reasonable I've focused on this.

However, as Mr W had already received a refund from the hotel, the chargeback wouldn't have succeeded in any event. I therefore don't need to consider the merits of the chargeback further and have instead focused on Barclays handling of the credit and subsequent re-debit of the funds in question.

I've addressed the key points below:

- Mr W was clearly aware that he had been refunded twice and so contacted Barclays about this. I've listened to the call made to Barclays on 7 March 2025 which was two days after his refunds. During the call Barclays explained that Mr W had received a refund from the hotel and that Barclays had also provided a temporary pre-credit while the chargeback was investigated.

Barclays then clarified the dispute was on-going, i.e. the chargeback claim had been raised but when it was resolved, the £149.00 would be taken back. Mr W clearly understood this would occur and the call ended.

I'm therefore satisfied that by 7 March 2025 Mr W understood that once the chargeback was resolved, the temporary credit would be reversed.

- Mr W in his submission to this service on 14 November 2025, following the investigator's view confirming the prior, stated that the time taken for the refund to be re-debited was far too excessive.

I've reviewed the correspondence from Barclays to Mr W and see two letters were sent on 24 July 2025. The first referred to a fraudulent transaction in error. It was actually referring to the hotel payment – and it confirmed that this amount had been refunded.

The second letter clarified that the chargeback dispute had been unsuccessful and the re-debit would occur in 14 days.

While the first letter contained an error – as there wasn't a fraudulent transaction – it did refer to a refund of £149.00. I do think it would be reasonable to conclude that the merchant referenced in this letter was the hotel from whom this sum had been refunded in March 2025.

The second letter then gave Mr W the notice he needed to arrange for the £149.00, which was to be taken from his account.

Mr W has said five months elapsed from the claim originally being raised on 7 March 2025. While I appreciate Mr W considers this a prolonged period, I've also considered what impact this delay reasonably had on him.

Mr W was made aware in March 2025 that the £149.00 credit was temporary and was likely to be reversed once the chargeback investigation concluded. While I appreciate the re-debit occurred several months later, I'm satisfied Barclays had already explained the position to him and later provided 14 days' notice before the amount was taken from his account.

In deciding what is fair and reasonable here, I've considered whether Barclays communicated clearly with Mr W about the temporary nature of the credit and whether he was given reasonable notice before the amount was taken back. Based on the call in March 2025 and the later written notice provided in July 2025, I'm satisfied they did.

Taking everything into account, I'm not persuaded Barclays administered the claim incorrectly. While I do empathise that Mr W had to wait a few months for the claim to end and for the money to be re-debited, I still consider he was adequately made aware that this would happen and was given appropriate notice as well.

Mr W has said that the funds being taken back meant he was placed in an unarranged overdraft and incurred further charges. He therefore considers this should be refunded. While I appreciate Mr W's position, I'm satisfied Barclays had already made him aware that the temporary credit could be reversed once the chargeback concluded.

Mr W also said that he told Barclays the re-debit had caused him financial difficulty and they referred him to support services available to consumers in this situation. I'm satisfied this was a reasonable step in the circumstances, and I haven't seen evidence there were other steps Barclays ought reasonably to have taken at this stage.

With all of this in mind, I'm not persuaded Barclays administered his chargeback claim incorrectly and need do anything more.

My final decision

For the reasons explained above, I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr W to accept or reject my decision before 10 April 2026.

Viral Patel
Ombudsman