

The complaint

Mr B is unhappy AMERICAN EXPRESS SERVICES EUROPE LIMITED (American Express) closed his account without providing a reason and withheld the cashback he'd already earned.

What happened

The details of the complaint are well known to both parties, so I won't repeat them again here. Instead, I'll focus on giving my reasons for my 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.

Having done so, I agree with the conclusions reached by the investigator for the following reasons:

- American Express has a wide range of legal and regulatory obligations they must meet when providing account services to their customers. These obligations are ongoing so don't just apply at account opening stage. To comply with these obligations, they may need to review accounts. Sometimes these reviews will lead to the accounts being closed. If American Express didn't do this, they could risk serious sanction.
- American Express is entitled to decide who they do business with, just as Mr B can decide who he wants to bank with. But it should be noted, that if a financial institution chooses to close an account, they should do so in line with the terms and conditions of the account, and their reasons should be legitimate, fair and non- discriminatory.
- Having reviewed the terms and conditions I'm satisfied American Express were entitled to suspend and subsequently close the account and the reasons for doing so were fair.
- The closure was not related to American Express wanting to avoid paying Mr B the cashback.
- I appreciate Mr B wants to know the reason American Express closed his account. I can appreciate his frustration about the lack of explanation given following his complaint and the difficulties he faced obtaining this. I'm satisfied American Express did address Mr B's complaint though. And I know this will be disappointing to him, but they don't have to share the specific reason for the closure with him. This type of information is often commercially sensitive. American Express does however have to share it with our service, so we can ensure it is acting correctly. Our rules allow us to accept evidence in confidence, and it wouldn't be appropriate for me to share the reasons with Mr B, for the same reason as above. But I hope that it helps him to know that someone impartial and independent has investigated his concerns.

- The terms and conditions detail that cashback won't be paid if American Express decide to close an account. And while I appreciate this seems unfair to Mr B, having reviewed the reasons for American Express closing the account, I'm satisfied that in addition to the terms allowing them to withhold cashback, their decision to do so was not unreasonable.

For these reasons, I do not uphold the complaint.

My final decision

My final decision is that I don't uphold Mr B's complaint against AMERICAN EXPRESS SERVICES EUROPE LIMITED.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr B to accept or reject my decision before 17 February 2026.

Sarah Brimacombe
Ombudsman