

## The complaint

Ms B complains that American Express Services Europe Limited (AESEL) didn't apply a payment she made to clear her credit card balance in a timely manner.

## What happened

Ms B has a credit card account with AESEL. On 30 September 2025, she says she sent a payment of £20,777 to repay her balance in full, however payment was not received within two hours like it normally is. She contacted AESEL about this on 1 October 2025 and AESEL said it hadn't yet received the funds. Over the following three days, Ms B says she called and emailed AESEL several times as she had become worried about what had happened to the payment.

On 3 October 2025, AESEL found the payment, stating that it was not transferred from her usual bank with "B", and that her other lender hadn't provided the correct information for it to allocate the payment. Ms B argues that the lender had sent the funds correctly and provided evidence to support this. She said she had offered to send AESEL evidence as early as 30 September 2025. And now because the payment had taken longer to be allocated to her account, she had suffered a loss due to the extra interest that had been added to her account and added onto her following months statement.

AESEL considered Ms B's concerns, but it didn't think it had done anything wrong. It explained that the payment had come from a mortgage company. And because her account is a personal AESEL product, all payments towards the account must come from a bank account in her name. AESEL explained that in addition to this, the 15 digit card number wasn't provided with the payment. It said that the payment was allocated on 3 October 2025 when a request was submitted to its payment team

An Investigator considered the information provided by both parties, but they didn't uphold Ms B's complaint. The Investigator explained that the terms and conditions of Ms B's account state that payments need to be made from an account in her name, and because it wasn't, the Investigator didn't think AESEL had done anything wrong when it couldn't allocate the payment to her account. The Investigator also didn't conclude that it had taken an unreasonable amount of time for the payment to be allocated to her account. And they explained why the interest Ms B had been charged was correct, and not as a result of something AESEL had done wrong.

Ms B provided lengthy responses to the Investigator's view, explaining why she didn't agree. She also said that she didn't think AESEL were reporting correct information to the credit reference agencies (CRA's), to which the Investigator explained to Ms B why they thought the reporting was correct.

Because an agreement couldn't be reached, the complaint has been passed to me to decide 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.

Having considered all of the evidence available, I've decided not to uphold Ms B's complaint. I appreciate this decision will be very disappointing for her; however, I'll explain how I have reached my outcome below.

Before I do that, I wanted to make it clear I've read and taken into account all of the information provided by both parties, in reaching my decision. I say this as I'm aware I've summarised Ms B's complaint and the responses to the Investigator's view in considerably less detail than she has. If I've not reflected something that's been said it's not because I didn't see it, it's because I didn't deem it relevant to the crux of the complaint. This isn't intended as a discourtesy to either party, but merely to reflect my informal role in deciding what a fair and reasonable outcome is. This also means I don't think it's necessary to get an answer, or provide my own answer, to every question raised unless I think it's relevant to the crux of the complaint.

Ms B made the payment from an account that wasn't in her personal name. This goes against the terms and conditions of how she is required to manage her account. In addition to this, she didn't include her card number as reference for the payment and so it couldn't be allocated to her account. The statements Ms B receives each month explain what information should be included as part of a payment transfer. Without this information included as part of the transfer, there was no way for AESEL to link the payment to Ms B's account. Based on this, it's difficult for me to be able to conclude that AESEL made a mistake when it didn't automatically allocate a payment to her account.

I can see Ms B got in touch with AESEL on 30 September 2025. I can see from the notes that she was told to wait, as it can take a few days for the payment to go through – especially for larger amounts. I can also see she contacted AESEL on several occasions following this asking about the payment – it was explained to her that it could take up to five days. The payment was then allocated to Ms B's account on 3 October 2025 following a conversation she had with an advisor. I can understand why Ms B would have been worried about the payment not reaching her account – especially given the value of it. That said, I don't think there's anything unreasonable about the length of time it took AESEL to find the payment and allocate it to Ms B's account. AESEL could have done more sooner to understand that the payment wouldn't likely be allocated to her account given where she had sent the payment from and that it included the wrong reference, but that said, payments made by transfer can sometimes take days to come through. I note Ms B says that they usually come through within two hours; but the normal time for a BACS transfer is around three working days and while CHAPS transfers are generally cleared on the same day as requested, they can still take time depending on security checks at the sending bank. So, I don't find that AESEL's advice for Ms B to wait was unreasonable. And for this reason, I don't find it unreasonable that it didn't immediately raise a request to find the payment. Overall, I'm not persuaded that the time it took for the payment to be allocated to her account was unreasonable.

I note Ms B says she's been charged additional interest as a result of the payment being allocated to her account late. As I've explained, AESEL weren't at fault for the payment not immediately having been allocated to Ms B's account – she sent the payment from an account that wasn't hers without the correct reference. Therefore, any interest that has been applied to Ms B's account on the balance from 30 September 2025 is fair and reasonable. That being said, it appears that the majority of the interest Ms B had been charged on her statements was as a result of the prior transactions she had made, and not paid off in full by

her payment due date. So I'm not persuaded she has lost out financially as a result of something AESEL has done wrong.

In addition to this, Ms B now states that AESEL has unfairly reported negative information to the CRA's, which in turn has resulted in her overdraft being removed and her access to other credit impaired. She has provided a copy of what AESEL are reporting to the CRA's as evidence of this. From what I can see on Ms B's credit report, AESEL has reported that she missed, or was late, making payments in July, August and September 2025. So I have looked at Ms B's statements to see what's happened.

In June 2025, Ms B's repayment to the account was returned as unpaid, so AESEL recorded the payment as having been missed (correctly reported for July 2025). In July 2025, Ms B's payment was returned again so another missed payment was recorded (correctly reported for August 2025), however she made a payment which went towards June's overdue payment. In August 2025, no repayment was made, so again this was reported to the CRA's for September 2025. In October 2025, I can see that AESEL recorded that payment had been made.

AESEL are required to report accurate information to the CRA's about how someone has managed their account. Where a repayment for the full amount due, hasn't been made by the payment due date, it would be fair, reasonable, and importantly accurate for this to be recorded with the CRA's. Based on what I've seen, AESEL has accurately reported that Ms B had missed/late payments.

I note Ms B doesn't feel that where her payment has been reversed then this should be reported to the CRA's. Where a payment is reversed, this is usually due to insufficient funds available to pay from the bank – this can also occur where the direct debit instruction has been cancelled. Either way, the reversal represents a reversal of the payment requested by AESEL, which means the payment didn't ever reach the account. Therefore, it isn't unfair or unreasonable for AESEL to report these as missed payments – because this reflects what happened – a payment was missed.

None of the negative reporting to the CRA's is related to the delay in her payment being allocated to her account later than she expected. I note Ms B's comments in that the negative reporting will cause her credit harm – I presume by this she means it will be more difficult for her to get credit. And I agree that this could be the case. But given that the reporting is an accurate reflection of how Ms B has managed her account, I won't be asking AESEL to change what it has reported.

### **My final decision**

For the reasons set out above, I don't uphold Ms B's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Ms B to accept or reject my decision before 20 February 2026.

Sophie Wilkinson  
**Ombudsman**