

## **The complaint**

Mr N complains that American Express Services Europe Limited (AESEL) carried out a credit check and reduced his credit limit.

## **What happened**

Mr N holds a credit card with AESEL. In May 2025 Mr N's credit limit was reduced from £8000 to £5000 following a credit check. Mr N says that the credit limit reduction increased his credit utilisation ratio which impacted his credit score.

Mr N subsequently lost his job and experienced financial difficulties. He says his request for a payment plan was refused.

Mr N complained to AESEL. He said the interest charges being applied to his account were unreasonable. He was unhappy that his credit limit had been reduced and said this had caused him to exceed the limit and incur charges. He was also unhappy that his payment proposals had been rejected.

AESEL didn't uphold the complaint, so Mr N complained to this service.

Our investigator didn't uphold the complaint. They said AESEL had reduced the credit limit in line with the terms and conditions of the account. They also said that AESEL had discussed a payment plan with Mr N, but this hadn't been agreed as Mr N was unable to make the contractual minimum payment.

Mr N didn't agree. He said he didn't agree that AESEL should've carried out a UK credit check whilst he was living and working abroad. He also said his request for a temporary affordable payment arrangement was refused.

Because Mr N didn't agree I've been asked to review the complaint.

## **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 it will disappoint Mr N, but I agree with the investigator's opinion. I'll explain why.

Firstly, I'll address the credit limit reduction. Mr N has said that AESEL shouldn't have carried out a UK credit check because he was living and working abroad.

I've reviewed the account. I can see that on 5 May 2025 AESEL carried out a review of Mr N's account. The review considered factors such as payment history, overall borrowing and credit bureau data. All lenders – including AESEL – are obliged to carry out reviews to ensure that lending remains responsible and affordable.

The terms and conditions of the account allow AESEL to reduce the credit limit at any time. Mr N agreed to these terms and conditions when he took out the account.

Based on the information I've seen, I'm unable to say that AESEL made an error or treated Mr N unfairly when it reviewed the account and reduced the credit limit.

Mr N has also referenced the interest applied to his account, which he feels was unreasonable. I've reviewed the account and I'm satisfied that interest has been applied in accordance with the terms and conditions of the account. I can see that Mr N didn't pay his balance in full each month, so the outstanding balance continued to attract interest.

Mr N has said that AESEL ignored his attempts to set up a manageable payment plan that reflected his financial situation. I've reviewed the contact notes to decide whether AESEL treated Mr N fairly. I can see that AESEL contacted Mr N on 2 June 2025 regarding the overdue balance on his account. Mr N advised AESEL of his financial situation and the issues he'd experienced with trying to set up a direct debit. AESEL explained to Mr N that he would need to speak to a specialist team regarding a payment plan, but the contact notes indicate that Mr N didn't want to do this.

I can see that Mr N contacted AESEL in July 2025 regarding his reduced credit limit, and that he contacted AESEL several times in August 2025 with a request for a payment plan of £50 per month. I appreciate that Mr N's position is that his offer was unreasonably refused. However, AESEL isn't obliged to accept an offer which is less than the contractual minimum payment and, in this case, the contractual minimum payment was significantly more than Mr N's offer. I can see that AESEL referred Mr N to a specialist team and that he had a conversation with the specialist team in September 2025 about repayment options. Based on what I've seen in the contact notes, no payment arrangement was agreed.

Taking all the available information into account, I'm unable to uphold the complaint. I haven't found any evidence to suggest that AESEL made an error or that it treated Mr N unfairly.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that I don't uphold the complaint.

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

Emma Davy  
**Ombudsman**