

## **The complaint**

Mr M complains about the treatment he received in branch from HSBC UK Bank plc (HSBC) when making a cash withdrawal. Mr M presented his HM Armed Forces Veteran ID card along with his bank card to verify his identity but was told his ID card isn't acceptable.

Following a complaint raised, Mr M was advised his HM Armed Forces Veteran ID card is an accepted form of identification. However, there was a second incident in the same branch where his ID card was rejected once again, and Mr M has complained further about this.

## **What happened**

Mr M visited a HSBC branch to make a cash withdrawal, presenting his bank card and HM Armed Forces Veteran ID card. He states he was advised this form of ID isn't accepted, so he provided his driving license to continue his transaction.

Mr M raised complaint to HSBC on the same day, describing how this interaction had made him feel humiliated and belittled, and asked for a formal apology and for HSBC to review its policies and ensure staff are trained to recognise valid identification.

HSBC sent a final response to Mr M summarising his complaint and apologised for the confusion caused at his visit to branch. This letter also confirmed his HM Armed Forces Veteran ID card is an acceptable form of identification.

HSBC acknowledged there had been confusion but felt there had been no service issue and as Mr M had still been able to complete his withdrawal, no award was made. Mr M remained unhappy with this response and brought his complaint to this service.

During the time this service progressed Mr M's complaint, he returned to the same branch to make a further cash withdrawal and his HM Armed Forces Veteran ID card wasn't accepted again.

Mr M asked to speak to a manager whilst in branch and presented the final response letter he had been issued which confirmed his ID card should be accepted. He was advised the area director had confirmed this card shouldn't be accepted. Mr M requested to speak to a manager but was advised one wasn't available.

Following this interaction, Mr M raised a further complaint to HSBC who reviewed this and sent a final response. It addressed the differences between a HM Armed Forces ID card and Veteran card, apologised for any misunderstanding and offered £100 compensation for the conflicting information.

Mr M remained unhappy with this response, and it was agreed by Mr M, HSBC and this service to review both complaints together and an investigator looked into things.

The investigator upheld Mr M's complaint, recognising there had been poor customer service and incorrect information and recommended HSBC pay Mr M a further £100 compensation,

£200 in total.

Mr M didn't feel this amount fully reflected the impact and seriousness of his complaint, in particular the repeated incident and asked for an ombudsman to decide things.

### **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'd like to begin by expressing my understanding to Mr M. I appreciate the depth of feeling behind this complaint and I'd like to confirm I've read everything carefully before reaching my decision. I know this will come as a disappointment to Mr M, but I have reached the same outcome as the investigator.

Firstly, I have read the evidence provided from both sides and I can recognise how the conflicting information has caused upset and frustration to Mr M.

During his first visit to branch, Mr M's HM Armed Forces Veteran ID card was not accepted as formal identification to make a cash withdrawal. I feel it is important to explain my investigation has determined HSBC have followed their process correctly with regards to this ID.

HSBC have explained a Veteran ID card doesn't fall within its standard document criteria, but it does meet procedural requirements in exceptional circumstances. This confirms Mr M's Veteran ID card can be accepted if he doesn't have anything else. However, there can be limitations at what actions can be taken, and as Mr M was able to present a driving license when asked, his withdrawal request was completed.

It is not the role of this service to ask a business to change its internal policies or processes. These are commercial decisions and not something I can get involved with.

However, another aspect of this complaint is the customer service Mr M has received and how HSBC handled his complaint, and I need to assess what I think is fair and reasonable in the circumstances of Mr M's complaint.

Mr M states his ID card was refused in branch, whereas HSBC state he was asked if he had an alternative form of ID. As I wasn't present, I'm unable to determine exactly what happened or the levels of service received during this interaction.

However, I can confirm Mr M was given incorrect information about this policy and his Veteran ID card following this visit. Mr M raised a formal complaint and in the final response letter he received addressing this, he was advised his HM Armed Forces Veteran ID card is an acceptable form of identification.

As Mr M felt this had clarified any confusion around his ID card, he visited the same branch for a second time several weeks later to complete a second cash withdrawal. I can completely understand Mr M's frustration when his ID wasn't accepted again despite this previous written clarification.

Both sides have provided information regarding the conduct of behaviour during this second visit. Mr M says he felt the staff were aggressive, dismissive and unprofessional and it is clear from HSBC's account Mr M was upset and frustrated with the service he received. Like his first branch visit, I am unable to decide on what happened as I wasn't present.

I can determine this situation escalated due to the incorrect information Mr M was given in his final response letter. HSBC apologised this error and offered £100 compensation.

It also provided a comprehensive explanation about the difference between a HM Armed Forces ID card and a HM Armed Forces Veteran ID card and I am satisfied this explains the process to avoid any further issues in the future for Mr M.

Mr M felt the investigator hadn't considered the impact of the second branch visit when issuing their view.

I have reviewed this, and I can sympathise with Mr M and the frustration caused on this day. However as detailed above, I think the branch were following the correct process, and the error stemmed from the complaints team who issued the final response letter.

Whilst HSBC apologised in their second response and offered £100 compensation, I think HSBC could have handled things better, but I am confident both parties are clear on the application of this identification process going forwards.

I have also considered the way Mr M felt during this visit. Whilst I am unable to decide on what happened, I am not disputing Mr M has felt upset over this experience and have considered his comments and explanation of how he has felt.

I must also assess this in line with our compensation awards and decide what is fair in this circumstance. I think HSBC made a mistake, this required reasonable effort from Mr M to sort out, and HSBC resolved this error in the second final response letter. However, Mr M could still complete the transactions he required on both visits to branch.

Based on this, I think £200 is fair and reasonable.

Mr M also added he was unhappy with information provided by HSBC. It advised he can withdraw up to £1,000 a day from the Post Office so he doesn't always need to rely on the branch.

Mr M explained after doing this, he was then unable to withdraw further funds from an ATM as he had reached a daily limit.

Whilst I understand the inconvenience of this situation, I think HSBC have offered this advice to support Mr M with alternative options and ATM withdrawal wasn't discussed by either party. I wouldn't expect HSBC to discuss all possible scenarios, and I don't think any incorrect advice has been given here.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that I uphold the complaint, and HSBC should pay Mr M £200 compensation in total.

If £100 has already been paid as agreed in the final response letter, it needs to pay a further £100.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr M to accept or

reject my decision before 27 March 2026.

Hannah Edmondson  
**Ombudsman**