

The complaint

Mr W complains that Wise Payments Limited didn't do enough to help him when he told it about a dispute he had with a merchant over goods paid for using his Wise card.

What happened

On 30 December 2024 Mr W purchased a number of items from an online marketplace. He made a single payment of £732.39 using his Wise account card.

Mr W has said the items were delivered on 3 January 2025 and he encountered a number of problems with the items purchased. He's said all items either weren't as described or fit for purpose and he returned them. When Mr W didn't receive a refund as expected, he contacted the online marketplace. Mr W says he received no response from the online marketplace and so turned to Wise for help to recover the funds paid.

Wise considered whether a chargeback could be raised. However, it ultimately decided not to raise one. Unhappy with Wise's response, Mr W referred his complaint to our service.

One of our investigators considered the complaint and most recently they upheld it. They thought that Mr W's chargeback had a realistic prospect for success and so should have been raised. They also thought Wise should compensate Mr W for how it handled his chargeback request and for not initially implementing his communication needs. Wise didn't agree and asked for an ombudsman to consider the complaint.

I issued a provisional decision on this complaint where I explained I didn't intend to uphold the complaint. In my provisional decision I explained:

- Under 3.5.9R Dispute Resolution Rules (DISP), which form part of the Financial Conduct Authority's handbook I am able to accept information in confidence providing I give a summary of the information.
- I thought it was appropriate to accept information in confidence in the circumstances of this complaint, and I provided a summary that the evidence is of a commercially sensitive nature and justified Wise's decision not to raise the chargeback. So I didn't think it was fair or reasonable to require Wise to compensate Mr W for its failure to raise the chargeback.
- For these reasons I also didn't think it was fair to additionally compensate Mr W for Wise's initial failure to implement Mr W's communication adjustments.

In response Wise accepted the provisional decision. Mr W made a number of points in response. He's provided detailed submissions about the circumstances of his complaint and why he feels the chargeback should have been raised. In addition, he's argued that the outcome I reached in my provisional decision is inconsistent with outcomes reached in other disputes he has raised and is inconsistent with final decisions made by other ombudsmen at this service.

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 carefully considered everything I've been provided in response to my provisional decision, and I appreciate the time Mr W has taken to provide such a detailed response. However, I'm not persuaded I should depart from the findings I reached in my provisional decision. So it follows that I don't uphold this complaint.

As I explained in my provisional decision:

A chargeback is the process by which payment settlement disputes are resolved between card issuers and merchants, under the relevant card scheme rules. It allows customers to ask for a transaction to be refunded in a number of situations, some common examples being where goods or services aren't provided, or where goods or services aren't as described.

There's no automatic right to a chargeback; the chargeback process doesn't give consumers legal rights; and chargeback is not a guaranteed method of getting a refund because chargebacks may be defended by the merchant. This is because the rules, set out by the card scheme lay down strict conditions which must be satisfied for a chargeback claim to succeed. If a financial business thinks that a claim won't be successful, it doesn't have to raise a chargeback. But, as Mr W has highlighted, where there's a reasonable chance of success, I'd expect a financial business to raise a chargeback.

Wise has provided evidence to demonstrate why it feels it was reasonable not to raise Mr W's chargeback request. After carefully considering the content of what Wise has provided, I don't think Wise acted unreasonably or unfairly by not raising a chargeback on Mr W's behalf. I understand that Mr W will naturally want to know the information I have weighed in order to reach this finding. However, I am treating this information in confidence, which is a power afforded to me under the Dispute Resolution Rules (DISP), which form part of the Financial Conduct Authority's handbook.

DISP sets out our service's jurisdiction and powers, including those which relate to information and evidence.

DISP 3.5.9 R states:

“ The Ombudsman may:

(1) exclude evidence that would otherwise be admissible in a court or include evidence that would not be admissible in a court;

(2) accept information in confidence (so that only an edited version, summary or description is disclosed to the other party) where he considers it appropriate; ...”

I have accepted information in confidence which I am not disclosing to Mr W. A description of this is that it is commercially sensitive information and it is of a nature that justifies Wise's decision not to raise Mr W's chargeback request. This has led me to reach a decision that compensating Mr W for Wise's failure to raise a chargeback on his behalf would not be appropriate or reasonable in this case.

I appreciate that this will be disappointing for Mr W who strongly feels the chargeback should have been raised. However, as I've explained above and in my provisional decision, the

evidence Wise has provided is commercially sensitive and has persuaded me that it wouldn't be reasonable or appropriate to uphold this complaint.

Mr W has provided a number of submissions about other cases and disputes he thinks are similar and where a different outcome has been reached. I appreciate Mr W's argument here, however we look at each case individually and having done so on this particular case, I think this is a fair and reasonable outcome in the circumstances.

Communication adjustments

As previously explained I can see Wise acknowledged it initially failed to put in place adjustments to its communication with Mr W. This was despite being aware of his communication needs.

However, I don't think Wise should pay additional compensation in light of this. As I've explained above, due to the nature of the commercially sensitive information Wise has provided, which I find persuasive, I don't think it's reasonable or appropriate for it to compensate Mr W. And, I think this extends to a payment for additional compensation for distress which may have been caused in the handling of the chargeback claim.

My final decision

My final decision is that I don't uphold this complaint against Wise Payments Limited.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr W to accept or reject my decision before 6 March 2026.

Claire Lisle
Ombudsman