

The complaint

Mr B complains that Santander UK Plc did not block a payment after assuring him that it would.

What happened

Mr B says he received a message asking him to accept a charge of £229.19 which he believed to be fraudulent. He says that, when he called Santander to block the payment to a hotel booking site, he was told it would do so. As a result, he says, he went on to make a subsequent booking directly with the hotel. Mr B says he was abroad at the time, and he now wants the initial charge refunded.

Santander acknowledges that Mr B received conflicting information about whether the transaction had been stopped when he called on 30 June 2025. It says the issue should not have been raised as a fraud claim by its agent, and the transaction had already been authorised by the time Mr B called. Santander says it advised Mr B to request a refund from the merchant instead and, if that was unsuccessful, he could then raise a card payment dispute. Santander apologised for the inconvenience and said it would credit his account with £30.

However, following further evidence from Mr B with respect to the subsequent payment he made to the hotel, Santander has agreed to reimburse him for this additional charge of £130.79.

Our investigator considered Santander's offer was fair. He said it was reasonable for Santander to hold Mr B liable for the initial payment but was not satisfied that £30 was reflective of the inconvenience caused by the incorrect information. He found Santander's offer to refund the £130.79 second payment to be fair.

Mr B responded to say, in summary, that Santander had reassured him that the initial payment would be returned to his account, but he is now being charged interest on it. He said he would like the full amount of the first payment refunded.

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 have listened to the call Mr B made to Santander on 30 June 2025, and it is evident that he wanted the payment to the hotel booking site blocked, as he said he wouldn't make it there in time. However, the Santander customer service agent appears to consider the request as notification of a fraudulent transaction and treats it as such. She goes on to confirm to Mr B

that both the card and the transaction were blocked, although she also says that the transaction would be investigated.

So, although I am satisfied that Mr B authorised the transaction, and Santander has sent further evidence to show this, he was given misleading information on the call. I cannot conclude, however, that the transaction was fraudulent, and so Mr B remains liable for it even though he changed his mind after authorising it.

That said, Santander has accepted that Mr B was given incorrect information on the call and has paid him £30 for this.

However, this service aims to put a consumer back in the position he would have been in had the mistake not happened. In this case, Mr B acted on the basis that Santander had told him the transaction had been blocked. He then proceeded to make a subsequent hotel booking.

I consider it likely that, if Mr B had been correctly informed that the transaction could not be cancelled, because he had authorised it himself, he would not have made the second booking. I say this because, although Mr B has not confirmed the details of each booking, I have seen evidence that both were for the same hotel. It is possible that the initial booking, made via an intermediary, was for two nights and that the second booking, made directly with the hotel, was for the second night only.

If Santander had not given Mr B the wrong information, then he would have known that the transaction could not be blocked. So, although he may not have made a second booking, he would still have been charged for the original hotel room.

In summary, I'm satisfied that, if Mr B had received the correct information, he would not have made an unnecessary second booking, but I do not find that Santander's actions mean he should be refunded for the first. Ultimately, it is not a reasonable outcome for Mr B to pay nothing for his hotel stay.

Putting things right

So in order to put Mr B back in the position he would have been, I find it fair that Santander should reimburse him the £130.79.

My final decision

My decision is that I uphold this complaint. Santander UK Plc should reimburse Mr B with the £130.79, as it has offered to do.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask X to accept or reject my decision before 14 April 2026.

Amanda Williams
Ombudsman