

Complaint

Ms L complains that Revolut Ltd restricted her account and asked her to provide information about payments into the account.

Background

Ms L has an account with Revolut. On 9 April 2019, Revolut blocked it until 20 May 2019. This meant she wasn't able to use her account during that time. And it asked Ms L to provide information about payments that had been made into her account. Once Revolut had completed its review it allowed Ms L to access her account again.

Ms L has explained that the block to her account caused her a great deal of stress and inconvenience as she was organising a wedding celebration. And she'd needed access to the money which had been paid into her account to pay suppliers and for the cost of the venue, which was overseas.

Revolut said it hadn't done anything wrong when it reviewed Ms L's account and had acted in line with its regulatory requirements. Ms L disagreed. She said the information Revolut asked her to provide was unreasonable. So she brought her complaint to this service.

One of our investigators looked into Ms L's complaint. He said Revolut hadn't done anything wrong when it had reviewed Ms L's account. Ms L disagreed. And she asked for an ombudsman to review her complaint.

My findings

I've considered all the available evidence and arguments to decide what's fair and reasonable in the circumstances of this complaint.

It's clear from what Ms L has told us and the bank that she feels very strongly about her complaint. I appreciate she's upset that Revolut blocked her account. And that this has caused her inconvenience and was no doubt stressful – especially as Ms L was trying to organise a wedding celebration overseas. But for me to uphold this complaint, I must be satisfied that the bank has done something wrong. And in this case, I don't think it has. I'll explain why.

All banks in the UK are strictly regulated and must take certain actions in order to meet their legal and regulatory obligations. Banks are also required to carry out ongoing monitoring of an existing business relationship. That sometimes means banks need to restrict customers' accounts and ask for information about payments into an account. Revolut has said that Ms L's access to her account was blocked to meet these legal requirements.

The timing of Revolut's actions was unfortunate. Ms L was trying to organise a party for a wedding overseas involving a large number of people, which understandably was very important to her. She needed to be able to use the money which had been paid into her account to fund the event. So, I can understand why she found this experience with Revolut stressful and upsetting.

But as I've already explained businesses have a legal obligation to comply with various laws and regulations. Having looked at what's happened in this case, I'm satisfied that the bank was complying with its obligations when it blocked Ms L's account. And it asked her for more information about the payments into her account. The terms and conditions of Ms L's

account also permit Revolut to block an account. Having considered those terms, I'm satisfied Revolut acted in line with them. So, I can't say Revolut has treated Ms L unfairly when it blocked her account.

I can see that Ms L first contacted Revolut on 17 May 2019 about the block to her account. And that she provided the bank with information about payments into her account, which was intended to cover the cost of the venues she'd booked for the party she'd organised. She explained to Revolut that the payments into her account were made by the people she'd invited, and that they had all contributed towards the cost of the planned celebration. Revolut reviewed the information Ms L provided and removed the block from her account on 20 May 2019.

I know Ms L feels the information Revolut asked her to provide was unreasonable. But the bank was within its rights to ask Ms L for more information about the money which had been paid into her account if it felt it needed further clarification. And it had to make certain checks to comply with its regulatory obligations. So I can't say it treated Ms L unfairly when it asked her to provide this information.

I appreciate of course that Revolut's actions caused Ms L stress and inconvenience. So, I realise Ms L will be disappointed by my decision. But it wouldn't be appropriate to make an award of compensation for that, since I don't believe Revolut acted inappropriately when it blocked Ms L's account and asked her for information.

My final decision

For the reasons I've explained, I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Ms L to accept or reject my decision before 16 May 2020.

Sharon Kerrison
Ombudsman