

complaint

Mr L complains Vanquis Bank Limited wrongly declined his credit card transaction for £5 worth of petrol. He says this caused him considerable distress and inconvenience, for which he would like compensation.

background

Mr L attempted to buy £5 of petrol at a service station using the 'pay at pump' facility, whereby the card is presented at the pump to pre-authorise the transaction. No purchase amount is entered, as the petrol has not yet been taken. He says the refusal of credit was embarrassing, and meant he had to rely on a friend to travel 23 miles to pay for the petrol. Vanquis has said it has a policy of referring 'pay at pump' transactions for extra security checks, which it did in this case, and which resulted in the refusal.

The adjudicator did not recommend that the complaint should be upheld. She considered that Vanquis was able to rely on the account terms and conditions, which state that it may apply particular security measures to certain transactions. She was satisfied that the circumstances of the transaction met the requirements of this policy and that Vanquis had acted in line with the account terms and conditions. Mr L does not agree, saying the policy is arbitrary and he has been caused significant embarrassment.

my findings

I have considered all the available evidence and arguments to decide what is fair and reasonable in the circumstances of this complaint.

A 'pay at pump' transaction requires pre-authorisation of the customer's card, as the amount of the transaction will only be known once the petrol has been taken. Vanquis has provided details of the extra checks it applies to such transactions, to prevent customers from exceeding their credit limits and to minimise security risks. Where the available credit is less than 5% of the credit limit, it automatically subjects the transaction to these checks. The ability to impose such additional checks is referred to in the account terms and conditions. I am therefore satisfied that Vanquis is able to subject these transactions to further scrutiny.

Here, Mr L wanted to withdraw £5 worth of petrol. Vanquis has said that if Mr L had access to the funds, he could have paid over the counter. While I appreciate that Mr L has said that the service station would not accept transactions below £10, this is not Vanquis' fault and does not affect its right to set its own security procedures.

I realise the episode was upsetting for Mr L, but I cannot conclude that this was due to any error by Vanquis.

my final decision

My final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Catherine Wolthuizen
ombudsman

