

## The complaint

Mr A complains that Revolut Ltd unfairly closed his account without providing a proper explanation. He wants Revolut to reopen his account.

## What happened

The detailed background of this complaint is well known to both parties. So, I'll only provide a brief overview of some of the key events here.

Mr A had an account with Revolut that he opened in 2020. Mr A says the account wasn't his main account as he has others, and that he used his Revolut account for online purchases and cryptocurrency trading.

In April 2021, Revolut reviewed Mr A's account. Whilst it completed the review Revolut blocked Mr A's account. Following this, Revolut decided to close Mr A's account immediately. Mr A contacted Revolut via its in app chat facility to try and find out what was happening to his account and why Revolut no longer wanted him as a customer. But Revolut wouldn't give him much information.

Mr A complained to Revolut and asked them to reconsider its decision to close his account. In response, Revolut, reviewed everything but said it hadn't done anything wrong when it had closed the account and that it wasn't willing to reopen Mr A's account. Revolut said that it had closed the account in line with the terms, conditions, and relevant regulations. And said it didn't have to provide Mr A with an explanation for why it no longer wanted him as a customer.

Unhappy with this response Mr A brought his complaint to our service. He said Revolut had closed his account unfairly. He explained that he'd always used his account properly, isn't a bad guy and could explain all the transactions on the account if he had been asked to do so by Revolut. But Revolut hadn't asked him any questions, so he believes that Revolut made a mistake when it closed his account. He also said that he suspects Revolut discriminated against him on the basis of his nationality when it decided to close his account. So, he thinks Revolut closed his account unfairly and should reopen his account.

One of our investigators looked into what had happened. As part of his investigation the investigator asked Mr A for more information about how he used his account. Mr A provided copies of his other bank account statements to show how he funded his Revolut account, and details of cryptocurrency trades he'd made using his account. The investigator provided all the information to Revolut who after looking at the information maintained its position about closing Mr A's account.

The investigator looked at all the information and circumstances of Mr A's complaint. He didn't think Revolut had treated Mr A unfairly when it had closed his account. So, he didn't uphold the complaint.

Revolut agreed with the investigator's view. Mr A didn't. He said Revolut closed his account unfairly and he believes they did so based on his ethnicity. He wants Revolut to provide a proper explanation for why it closed his account.

As no agreement could be reached the matter has come to me to decide.

### **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 would add too that our rules allow us to receive evidence in confidence. We may treat evidence from financial businesses as confidential for a number of reasons – for example, if it contains information about other customers, security information or commercially sensitive information. It's then for me to decide whether it's fair to rely on evidence that only one party has seen. It's not a one-sided rule; either party to a complaint can submit evidence in confidence if they wish to, and we'll then decide if it's fair to rely on it. Here, the information is sensitive and on balance I don't believe it should be disclosed. But it's also clearly material to the issue of whether Revolut has treated Mr A fairly. So, I'm persuaded I should take it into account when deciding the outcome of the complaint.

I can see Mr A feels very strongly about his complaint. That's clear from what's he's said to us and to Revolut. Whilst I appreciate Mr A's frustration and how this matter has impacted him, it's important to point out that the only thing in question here is whether Revolut has done what it should have done. And I think it has. I'll explain why.

Revolut has important legal and regulatory obligations it must meet when providing accounts to customers. They can broadly be summarised as a responsibility to protect persons from financial harm, and to prevent and detect financial crime. To comply with its responsibilities Revolut will monitor accounts and carry out specific or occasional checks, which is common industry practice, which is what Revolut did here.

Revolut isn't obliged to reveal the reason(s) for reviewing Mr A's account. But I've considered the basis for the review, which I find was legitimate and in line with its legal and regulatory obligations. So, whilst I appreciate Mr A was caused inconvenience because Revolut blocked his account whilst it completed its review, I can't say Revolut have done anything wrong.

I'll next deal with the closure of Mr A's account. Revolut is entitled to close an account with Mr A just as he is entitled to close his account with Revolut. It's generally for banks and financial businesses to decide whether or not they want to provide, or to continue to provide, banking facilities to any particular customer. Unless there's a very good reason to do so, this service won't usually say that a bank must keep customer or require it to compensate a customer who has had their account closed. As long as they reach their decisions about that in a legitimate manner, this service won't usually intervene. But before Revolut closes an account, they must do so in way which is fair and complies with the terms and conditions of the account. I've looked at the terms and conditions and they state that Revolut could in certain circumstances close the account immediately, which is what happened here.

I've gone on to consider whether Revolut's reason for closing the account was fair. In doing so, I appreciate that Revolut are entitled to set their own policies and part of that will form their risk criteria. It is not in my remit to say what policies or risk appetite Revolut should

have in place. I can however, while considering the circumstances of individual complaints, decide whether I think customers have been treated fairly.

Revolut has provided some further details of its decision making process, I'm sorry but I can't share this information with Mr A due to its commercial sensitivity. But I've seen nothing to suggest Revolut's decision around closing Mr A's account was unfair. On balance when considering Revolut's wider regulatory responsibilities and all the information available to me, which includes how Mr A was using his account, I find Revolut had a legitimate basis for closing Mr A's account immediately and not tell him why. So, I don't find Revolut treated Mr A unfairly when it closed his account. So, I won't be asking Revolut to reopen his account.

I know Mr A says that he is a victim of discrimination by Revolut. He believes Revolut closed his account on the grounds of his ethnicity. While I can appreciate this is his perspective, it is not my role to decide whether discrimination has taken place – only the courts have the power to decide this. I have, however, considered the relevant law in relation to what Mr A has said when deciding what I think is the fair and reasonable outcome. Part of this has meant considering the provisions of The Equality Act 2010 (The Act). And after looking at all the evidence, I've not seen anything to suggest that this was the case. So, I haven't found that Revolut decided to close the account for an improper reason.

While I appreciate how Revolut closing his account made Mr A feel and his perspective on why Revolut took the actions it has, I have to consider if other customers in similar situations would have been treated the same way. Having looked at all the evidence, I haven't seen anything to show that Revolut would have treated another customer with similar circumstances any differently than Mr A. So, I can't say Revolut treated Mr A unfairly because of his ethnicity.

In summary I realise Mr A will be disappointed by my decision. But having looked at all the evidence and circumstances of this complaint, I can't conclude that Revolut have treated Mr A unfairly when it blocked and closed his account. So, I won't be telling Revolut to do anything to resolve Mr A's complaint.

### **My final decision**

For the reasons I've explained, my final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr A to accept or reject my decision before 14 February 2024.

Sharon Kerrison  
**Ombudsman**