

The complaint

Mr A complains that American Express Services Europe Limited (AESEL) reduced his credit limit from £6000 to £900. He's unhappy that when he asked to appeal the credit limit reduction, he wasn't told that there was a fourteen day time limit for providing his documents in support.

What happened

Mr A holds a credit card account with AESEL. On 8 March 2023 AESEL reduced Mr A's credit limit and sent him an email explaining this.

On 13 March 2023 Mr A contacted AESEL and asked how to appeal the credit limit reduction. Mr A was advised to provide bank statements. Following this, AESEL advised Mr A that his documents had been received outside of the deadline and that the documents weren't sufficient.

Mr A contacted AESEL on 20 April 2023 and said he had further documents he wanted to send in. He was provided with an email address to send these to.

Mr A sent in further documents in May 2023. He called AESEL on 10 May 2023 and says the call handler refused to speak to him.

Mr A raised a complaint with AESEL. AESEL didn't uphold the complaint. It said it didn't think it had made any errors.

Mr A remained unhappy and complained to this service.

Our investigators said that AESEL had made an error by not informing Mr A of the deadline for providing documents in support of his appeal. They recommended that AESEL pay compensation of £100.

Mr A remained unhappy.

I issued a provisional decision in which I said that AESEL's terms and conditions allowed it to reduce the credit limit and I was satisfied that there hadn't been an error.

I reviewed the live chat transcript and call recordings. I said I hadn't found evidence that AESEL had advised Mr A of the fourteen day deadline to provide bank statements in support of his appeal. I said that this was an error by AESEL and that to reject Mr A's appeal on the grounds that his documents had been received late wasn't fair.

I went on to say that the appeal had been rejected not just because the documents were late, but because the documents weren't sufficient. So even if Mr A had been advised of the deadline and had complied with it, the appeal would still have been rejected.

I said I could see from the information provided that after the appeal was rejected, Mr A had contacted AESEL again and had been advised to send in revised documents. I said there was some disagreement between the parties as to exactly what was said to Mr A but on

balance, I was satisfied that Mr A had been told that he could send in bank statements when these were available.

I reviewed the call dated 10 May 2023 and found no evidence of a refusal to speak to Mr A. I said it was clear from the call that the agent was of the view that the appeal had already been rejected and that there was nothing further to discuss with Mr A.

I also found that there was no evidence to suggest that the further documents which Mr A had sent in had been reviewed. I said AESEL hadn't treated Mr A fairly in this respect.

I concluded that AESEL should complete its review once Mr A had supplied his last three months' worth of bank statements and advise Mr A of the outcome. I also said I thought AESEL should pay total compensation of £150.

I invited both parties to let me have any further evidence they wanted to rely on, or arguments they wished to raise.

Mr A didn't reply to the provisional decision. AESEL replied and said it accepted the decision.

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.

Mr A hasn't replied to my provisional decision and AESEL has accepted it. In the circumstances I see no reason to reach a different conclusion to that which I reached in my provisional decision.

Putting things right

To put things right, AESEL must pay total compensation of £150 to Mr A for the errors I've identified. It must also review Mr A's account to see whether his credit limit can be increased, such review to be carried out upon receipt of three months' worth of recent bank statements from Mr A.

My final decision

I uphold the complaint. American Express Services Europe Limited must take the steps I've set out above.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr A to accept or reject my decision before 6 March 2024.

Emma Davy
Ombudsman