



Money > News Money

### BAD BANK Digital bank suddenly closed my account with £11k in it – it was so embarrassing... and all their fault

Revolut is defending the claim - describing it as 'unmeritorious'

Ethan Singh

Published: 20:17, 17 Jan 2024 | Updated: 14:14, 18 Jan 2024



A MAN was left fuming after claiming a digital bank suddenly closed his account containing £11k.

Ildar Uzbekov is bringing legal action against banking app Revolut after he was allegedly "debanked", the High Court has heard.



Ildar Uzbekov was left fuming after £11k in payments was reversed credit: AFP

Mr Uzbekov is suing the digital bank for breach of contract after it closed his account in April 2020 and reversed payments worth £11,000.

The court heard he alleges that no explanation was provided for why his account was "unlawfully" closed.

But Mr Uzbekov claims the closure "appears to have resulted from factual mistakes made by Revolut, a coordinated media campaign against him and Revolut's approach to these issues".

Revolut is defending the claim - describing it as "unmeritorious" - and is making a bid for the case to be struck out as an abuse of process at a hearing on Wednesday.

Patrick Green KC, for Mr Uzbekov, said in written submissions: "Mr Uzbekov is seeking what amounts to a correction of the factual record as well as a finding regarding Revolut's breach of contract, to vindicate his reputation in that regard."

Green accused Revolut of "stonewalling" Uzbekov after freezing the account and causing him "significant distress and inconvenience".

However, the court heard that Uzbekov - who is the son-in-law of the late mining magnate Alexander Shchukin - managed to recover the £11,000 and is not seeking damages.

But this was said to be "to considerable personal embarrassment".

Tony Singla KC, for the bank, told the court the legal action "appears to be motivated by the fact that the claimant has experienced numerous bank account closures in the UK".

He also called the use of debanking a "red herring".

Debanking came to the fore after former Ukip leader Nigel Farage claimed Coutts, a high net-worth bank owned by NatWest Group, moved to close his account because they disagreed with his political beliefs.

Mr Singla said in written submissions that debanking "concerns situations where a customer's free speech rights, for example concerning the expression of political views, have been curtailed through the closure of retail bank accounts.

"That is entirely distinct from the claim as pleaded by Mr Uzbekov."

The barrister said financial investigators suspected Mr Uzbekov may have been involved in money laundering, and that it considered his continued use of the account "might damage its reputation and goodwill".

Mr Singla continued: "Mr Uzbekov is a British citizen and was born in Kazakhstan, but his father-in-law, now deceased, was Russian.

"Mr Uzbekov suggests that he is concerned that the closure of his account is linked to discriminatory attitudes against people of Russian origin.

"This is a baseless suggestion."

The hearing before Mr Justice Chamberlain is expected to conclude on Wednesday with a decision at a later date.

#### WHAT TO DO IF YOUR ACCOUNT IS SHUT

If your account is shut, it's important to try to find out if there are any problems that might have triggered the closure.

For crooks have stolen your identity and applied for loans in your name.

Start by running a free credit check through a service like moneysavingexpert.com's Credit Club, Credit Karma or ClearScore.

It's best to try all three if you're concerned in order to cover the three main credit agencies that keep records of your financial dealings.

The reports should help you spot if there are any accounts that you don't recognise.

If you're worried that your account might have been flagged as suspicious, you can also apply to two fraud-fighting organisations - Cifas and National Hunter - to find out what information they hold on you.

Again, when you write, say that you would like to make a "subject access request".

When can a bank shut down your account?

There are a few reasons why banks can shut down accounts, such as criminal activity and national security concerns, according to the reports.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) say the recent changes will not take away a banking firm's right to close accounts of people deemed to be reputational or political risk.

As it stands, the banks should allow a customer 30 days to make alternative banking arrangements before axing their account.

Lenders will suspend accounts if they detect any "suspicious activity", which might include sending or receiving large amounts of unexplained money.

It covers any transactions that don't fit with the users typical spending pattern.

If a bank suspects a customer has been a victim of fraud - where large sums of money are sent - it will close the account. ■