

The complaint

Mr M complains that Revolut Ltd incorrectly debited his account after two failed ATM withdrawals.

What happened

Mr M was abroad and used an Automated Teller Machine (ATM) to withdraw cash. He's explained he attempted to withdraw a smaller amount on the first attempt, but the ATM only dispensed a portion of what he'd asked for. Mr M then attempted to withdraw a much larger amount and again was only dispensed a small portion of the amount he'd asked for.

Mr M has described how he was on his own when he used the ATM and there was no one else near him. He said he waited for a while to see if his remaining money would be dispensed, but no further funds were received. There were no error messages on the ATM and Mr M received his card back. Mr M's Revolut account was debited with the full amount(s) he'd requested but not received.

Mr M contacted Revolut by email shortly after the problem with the ATM withdrawals and was told to use the banking app to chat with staff because the email he was using wasn't appropriate for his type of issue. Mr M was then asked to complete a chargeback declaration to enable Revolut to challenge the operator of the ATM about the issue with his two transactions.

Mr M was left frustrated by the time it was taking Revolut to deal with his losses and complained to them. Revolut responded, but only looked at how they had dealt with Mr M's complaint and not the actual loss of his funds. This was because the chargeback process was still being investigated.

Mr M remained unhappy with Revolut and complained to the Financial Ombudsman Service. It was looked into by one of our investigators who sought additional information from both Mr M and Revolut about the withdrawals. Revolut offered Mr M £20 as a goodwill gesture which he didn't accept.

Mr M described how he'd tried to make two withdrawals that both partially failed. On both occasions he received the same amount of funds from the machine in a local currency. Revolut contacted the operator of the ATM who sent information about the two withdrawals.

Our investigator thought it was reasonable for Revolut to hold Mr M liable for both of the transactions because the audit evidence showed the two withdrawals had been successful.

Mr M disagreed with the investigator's outcome and asked for a further review of his complaint. Mr M thought a "cash trap" machine might have been responsible for the problem.

Mr M's complaint has now been passed to me for a 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.

Revolut weren't the owners of the ATM so they were relying on evidence from the actual operator which they received through the chargeback process. This evidence indicates that both transactions were successful.

I understand Mr M thought a cash trap device might have been responsible for the problem. I haven't seen any evidence that shows any further enquiries were done about this, but I don't think it makes a difference to the outcome here. I say that because a cash trap would usually be designed to divert all the money and not allow a portion of the cash to be successfully dispensed. The whole point of such devices is to steal as much money as quickly as possible before they're reported to the authorities, so I don't think a cash trap was responsible for Mr M's difficulties at the ATM.

The audit evidence includes precise times the ATM was being used and which card was being used, how much was requested and a breakdown of the actual size of notes dispensed. There's also a countback of the notes from the particular area of the ATM that they were drawn from. The number of notes issued matched the countback tally. The operator of the ATM also confirmed it was working properly. What that means here is that it's more likely than not the ATM correctly dispensed the notes Mr M withdrew.

I appreciate Mr M has said no one else was near him and he waited at the machine after using it, but the audit evidence shows a different card was entered into the machine within two minutes of Mr M's last use of it. That transaction was also successful and the countback tallies with the number of notes dispensed – which includes the two transactions that Mr M made. If there were a problem with Mr M's transactions I would expect the ATM records to indicate this.

So, the evidence that Revolut were relying on indicated the two withdrawals were successful, including details of an additional (unrelated) withdrawal made only a few minutes after Mr M's last one – also successful. I think it was reasonable for Revolut to rely on this information and I won't be asking Revolut to do anything further.

Mr M had made a complaint about how Revolut had handled their investigation and it's apparent from the emails that Mr M sent, that he was in communication with Revolut some weeks prior to his issue being formally logged. Revolut wrote to Mr M and asked him to use a different channel to report his ATM issue because the email he was using was for a different purpose.

Once Mr M did this, Revolut acted on the information and launched a chargeback on Mr M's behalf. It did take a little while for the response to be received, but that's often the case with such requests. Revolut offered to pay Mr M £20 as a goodwill gesture to recognise the earlier delays he experienced, and I think this was a reasonable way for Revolut to deal with the earlier confusion about lodging a dispute.

My final decision

My final decision is that I don't uphold this complaint concerning the disputed transactions and Revolut Ltd should pay Mr M £20 which was previously offered by them.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr M to accept or reject my decision before 23 May 2022.

David Perry

Ombudsman