

The complaint

Mr O complains that Revolut Ltd won't refund the money he lost after falling victim to a scam.

Mr O is represented in this complaint by a claims management company, but for simplicity I will refer to Mr O throughout this decision, even when referencing what his representatives have said on his behalf.

What happened

In November 2023, Mr O was contacted by someone who said they could offer him a job opportunity. Mr O was told the job involved him completing tasks to promote online items. I'll refer to the company Mr O believed he was working for as R. Mr O was told he could earn a daily wage plus commission, but that he would need to deposit funds (in cryptocurrency) to complete some of the required tasks. Unfortunately, and unknown to Mr O, this was not a legitimate job opportunity, he was the victim of a scam.

Mr O initially made payments to the scam from an account held with another bank. But, late in the scam, he opened a Revolut account to facilitate his payments, from this account he attempted several card payments to accounts associated with cryptocurrency, which all failed or were declined, and then made one successful card payment – for £8,800 – to purchase cryptocurrency which was then moved on to the scammer. This was Mr O's final payment to the scam. When he was then told he had to pay an even higher amount before he would be able to unlock any profits he ultimately realised he had been the victim of a scam.

Mr O contacted Revolut about the scam payment and it looked into what had happened. But Revolut did not consider that it was responsible for refunding any of Mr O's loss, it said it had intervened appropriately in the payments Mr O made.

Mr O wasn't happy with Revolut's response, so he brought a complaint to our service. An investigator looked into Mr O's complaint but didn't uphold it. The investigator felt that Revolut had intervened appropriately and did not think it could reasonably be expected to have done more to protect Mr O.

Mr O disagreed with the investigator's opinion, he maintains that Revolut should have questioned him in more detail about the payment, so as no agreement could be reached this case 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.

Having done so, I've reached the same overall outcome as the investigator, I'll explain why.

It's not disputed that Mr O authorised the payment that is the subject of this complaint. So as per the Payment Service Regulations 2017 (which are the relevant regulations in place here) that means Mr O is responsible for it. That remains the case even though Mr O was the unfortunate victim of a scam.

Because of this, Mr O is not automatically entitled to a refund. But the regulatory landscape, along with good industry practice, also sets out a requirement for account providers to protect their customers from fraud and financial harm. And this includes monitoring accounts to look out for activity that might suggest a customer was at risk of financial harm, intervening in unusual or out of character transactions and trying to prevent customers falling victims to scams.

Taking the above into consideration, I need to decide whether Revolut acted fairly and reasonably in its dealings with Mr O, or whether it should have done more than it did.

In this case, Mr O opened his Revolut account specifically to make payments associated with this scam. So, Revolut had no account history against which to compare those payments to see if they were unusual or concerning, it would therefore be relying on generic indicators of risk. I acknowledge that, in this case, there were some indicators of risk associated with the payments Mr O made or attempted to make. Specifically, that they were for relatively high amounts and were to payees associated with cryptocurrency. And given these risk factors, I do think that it was reasonable to expect that Revolut should have intervened in some way with the payments Mr O was attempting to make.

However, I also note that Revolut evidently did have concerns about the payments Mr O was trying to make. Mr O has said that it blocked the first payment he tried to make, and that he had to watch a video, but it was not relevant to the type of scam he was falling victim to – a job scam. Revolut has sent us evidence that it did question Mr O about the blocked payments, and that Mr O said he was trying to make payments as part of an investment, so Revolut showed him warnings relating to cryptocurrency investment scams. During this process one of the options available for the payment purpose was “to complete a task on a job hiring process”. Arguably this payment purpose was much more relevant to Mr O's situation, but he did not choose it.

Mr O has argued that Revolut should have questioned him in much more detail, but given the limited history of the account, that there was not a pattern of successful payments that would have been indicative of a job scam, and that Mr O had said earlier attempted payments were associated with investment and had read warnings relating to investment scams, I'm satisfied that Revolut intervened appropriately here. I'm satisfied that a tailored warning was the appropriate level of intervention here, I would not expect Revolut to have intervened more directly in this payment, based on what it knew at the time. So, with this in mind, I don't consider that Revolut missed an opportunity to protect Mr O from this scam or to prevent his loss, it could only act on what it had been told.

I've also thought about whether Revolut did all it could to try to recover Mr O's funds when he told it of the scam. And Revolut did raise a chargeback regarding the successful scam payment, which was the correct action to take in the circumstances. But given that the payment Mr O made was to purchase cryptocurrency directly, that chargeback would not have had any reasonable prospect of success.

I'm sorry to disappoint Mr O as I know that he has lost a significant amount of money. But, overall, I'm satisfied that any reasonable, proportionate intervention from Revolut would not have prevented Mr O from making the payment to the scam. It follows that I don't think Revolut is liable for his loss and won't be asking it to refund any of his losses to him.

My final decision

I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr O to accept or reject my decision before 27 March 2025.

Sophie Mitchell
Ombudsman