

The complaint

Miss L complains that Revolut Ltd didn't do enough when she fell victim to a safe account scam.

What happened

Miss L has an account with Revolut which she opened in November 2017. She says she normally only uses the account when travelling which is consistent with the intended purpose of the account she gave when she opened it. Miss L has accounts elsewhere too, including an account with a business who I'll refer to as "M" throughout the rest of this decision.

Miss L contacted Revolut on 18 January 2024 to say she'd been speaking to someone claiming to be from Revolut who had told her that her other banks had noticed suspicious activity on her accounts. She said they'd told her that she needed to move all of her money into her Revolut account and then into a number of "safe accounts". Miss L says she was told she'd be called the next day with details allowing her to access the accounts. She says she contacted her banks when that didn't happen and realised she'd been tricked and scammed. She asked Revolut to help recover her money.

Miss L says Revolut handled her claim poorly. She says Revolut told her to submit chargeback claims – even though she'd said she'd been tricked into making the payments – and these claims were rejected as Revolut said she'd authorised the payments. In addition, she says that she received what appeared to be refunds from Revolut, but when she asked Revolut about these refunds it gave inconsistent and unhelpful responses. She complained.

Revolut looked into Miss L's complaint and said that it hadn't done anything wrong when it allowed the payments to go through as it had stopped them and done appropriate checks / given appropriate warnings. It said it had been able to recover just over £16,000's worth of her funds and had refunded the money it had recovered to her. Miss L complained to us saying she wanted the rest of her money back – she'd sent approximately £55,000 to the scammers including the proceeds of a £25,000 loan that she'd been tricked into taking out with M.

One of our investigators looked into Miss L's complaint and agreed that the payments were unusual and that Revolut should have done more than it did, including inviting Miss L into a chat. However, our investigator also thought that this wouldn't ultimately have made a difference as Miss L had been told by the person impersonating Revolut to "mask" the purpose of the payments and had given misleading answers when presented with warnings from Revolut. Our investigator thought Miss L would have done the same had she been invited into a chat meaning Revolut wouldn't have been able to spot or prevent the scam.

Miss L disagreed with our investigator's recommendations saying that a chat would have broken the spell. She asked for her complaint to be referred to an ombudsman for a decision. Her complaint was, as a result, passed on to me.

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.

In this case, I'm satisfied that Miss L made three transfers to three different new beneficiaries totalling approximately £37,500 and seven card payments to two different merchants totalling approximately £17,500 as part of the scam she's complained about. I'm satisfied that she funded those payments – all made on 17 and 18 January 2024 – having transferred money and savings she held in other accounts into her Revolut account, and having taken out a £25,000 loan from M. Or, to put it another way, that she funded those payments with her life savings and a substantial loan. Revolut has been able to recover just over £16,000 of the money she sent. The rest had already left the fraudster's accounts.

In this case, I'm also satisfied that Revolut asked Miss L the purpose of each of the three transfers she made as they were all flagged by its systems as potentially suspicious. Miss L chose "something else" as the payment purpose for the £15,000 and £8,900 transfers she made and "buying or renting goods" as the payment purpose for the £13,000 transfer.

I've seen a copy of the questions Revolut asked at the time when trying to identify how risky a transaction is with a view to giving an appropriate warning. The other options Miss L could have chosen at the time included:

- "transfer to my other account",
- "pay a family member or friend",
- "as part of an investment"; and
- "pay taxes or law enforcement fines".

Having chosen "something else" she would have been given five further options, including "moving money because my account is not safe" and "buying a property (i.e. paying a deposit or balance for a property).

I'm satisfied that when answering "buying or renting" Miss L told Revolut that she was "buying a property" and that she'd seen it in person and researched the seller / agent amongst other things. And she also confirmed that no-one was telling her which options to choose or that the payment was urgent. I'm also satisfied that Miss L didn't chose "moving money because my account is not safe" despite being offered that option when answering "something else". In other words, I'm satisfied that she wasn't truthful in her responses to Revolut.

Miss L has told us that she didn't think it was suspicious that the payments were going to three different accounts in three different names, and not an account in her name. She's told us that the scammers she was speaking to explained that this was to "mask" the payments so that the fraudsters who had compromised her accounts couldn't track the payments. And she's told us too that they explained anyone who questioned the payments wouldn't be aware of what was going on, so she should give a different explanation. I can see that on two occasions during the scam Miss L was speaking to Revolut – once to ask why one of the payments hadn't yet been received by her "friend" and once to ask why her account had been blocked. I agree with our investigator that Revolut shouldn't have just relied on the online warnings it gave and should have invited Miss L into a chat so as to ask more questions about the payments she was making. But given the answers she gave when she received the online warnings – including not selecting the "moving money because my

account is not safe” – and her evidence that the scammers told her she needed to “mask” the payments she was making and that she might get questioned, I don’t think Revolut could reasonably have uncovered what was going on as I don’t think she would have been truthful.

I’m satisfied that Revolut took action quickly to recover Miss L’s funds, and that it was able to recover just over £16,000 which it has refunded. In that sense it helped. But I can also see that Revolut told Miss L to raise chargebacks – despite her having made it clear that she had been tricked into authorising the payments – only to say that her chargebacks had failed because she’d authorised the payments. That didn’t help, and no doubt added to Miss L’s frustrations. In this case, however, I agree with our investigator that Revolut couldn’t have done more to prevent Miss L from making a loss. So, this isn’t a complaint I can uphold.

My final decision

My final decision is that I’m not upholding this complaint as I don’t think Revolut could have prevented Miss L from making a loss here.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I’m required to ask Miss L to accept or reject my decision before 8 October 2024.

Nicolas Atkinson
Ombudsman