

The complaint

Mr F complains Revolut Ltd didn't do enough to protect him when he fell victim to an investment scam.

What happened

Mr F has an account with Revolut and other businesses who I'll refer to as "M" and "B" respectively throughout the rest of this decision. He opened his account with Revolut in the course of this scam.

Mr F says he'd been interested in cryptocurrency for some time but had never been confident enough to go ahead and trade. He says he then saw an advert on a well-known social media platform about a company that helped people to buy and sell cryptocurrency. He says he clicked on the advert and gave his details and received a call from someone saying that they were from the company in question. Mr F says he was assigned an account manager and was added to a large group chat when he asked if there was any way of verifying that the investment was successful. He says this reassured him and that he opened a cryptocurrency wallet and a trading account on the investment company's platform. He was, in fact, speaking to scammers.

Mr F says he was told that the minimum amount he'd need to invest was \$1,000 which he was happy to do. He paid this from his account with M on 15 August 2023. Mr F says he invested more as his confidence grew. In November 2023 he was told that the £10,000 he'd invested in August 2023 was worth \$1.5 million – at this point he decided to make a sizeable withdrawal. He says he was told he'd need to pay fees to do so – initially to withdraw the money and then to unfreeze his account given the size of the withdrawal he'd tried to make. Mr F sent just over £36,000 to the scammers in total – funded from his savings, a loan he took out from B and money from friends and family. He sent approximately £30,000 from his account with M spread across a number of payments and approximately £6,000 from his account with Revolut. Mr F says he realised he'd been scammed when the people he was speaking to ceased all contact with him and the website he was logging onto was no longer available. He contacted Revolut, M and B to see if he could get his money back.

Revolut looked into Mr F's claim and said that the payment he'd made had been authorised by him and sent to a cryptocurrency wallet in his own name so it couldn't refund him. Mr F wasn't happy with Revolut's response and complained to our service. He wasn't happy with M's response or B's response either.

One of our investigators looked into all three of Mr F's complaints and didn't recommend that any of them be upheld. They said that Mr F had received proportionate warnings from Revolut and B but had nevertheless gone ahead with his payments. They didn't, therefore, think that any of the businesses had missed an opportunity to prevent further losses to Mr F and that there was nothing more they could have done to recover his money. Mr F wasn't happy with our investigator's recommendations and asked for his complaints to be referred to an ombudsman. His complaints were, as a result, passed 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.

I can see that Mr F opened his account with Revolut on 8 November 2023 and almost immediately tried to make payments to cryptocurrency. I can see that Revolut repeatedly declined the payments that Mr F was trying to make for a number of reasons. Revolut, for example, rejected some of his payments because they were going to take him over a daily limit that it had in place. The only payment that went out is the one he's complaining about – which is a payment for just over £6,500. I can see that Revolut's systems flagged this payment and that Mr F was shown warnings and that in the course of replying to those warnings he said that he was being guided in his responses. Mr F has said that this should have prompted a human intervention from Revolut, but like I don't agree. I have, instead, looked at all of the warnings Revolut gave as a whole in the course of Mr F getting the £6,500 payment authorised. Having done so, I agree with our investigator that it wouldn't be fair to hold Revolut liable for any losses Mr F incurred as a result of sending the £6,500 payment as I agree that there was nothing more it could have fairly and reasonably done or been expected to do. That's because I agree that the warnings Revolut gave when looked at as a whole were clear and proportionate to the risk involved.

As I've already mentioned, Revolut isn't the only business that Mr F has complained about, or the only business involved. I'm satisfied that by the time Mr F was making the £6,500 payment from his account with Revolut that he'd already received a really clear warning from B about the cryptocurrency investment scams and hadn't answered all of B's questions as honestly as he could have done. Mr F has told us that the scammers he was speaking to had told him how to answer certain questions or what information to provide when making the payments he's now complaining about. In other words, he was coached. I accept that he was coached and that's why he wasn't as honest as he could have been. More importantly, I've listened to the call Mr F had with B before he made the £6,500 payment. I've also listened to a later call that Mr F had with B during which the agent again gave Mr F very clear warnings about cryptocurrency investment scams, despite which he went ahead with the payments he wanted to make. I've taken those warnings into account too when deciding whether or not Revolut could have made a difference here.

My final decision

My final decision is that I'm not upholding this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr F to accept or reject my decision before 19 December 2024.

Nicolas Atkinson
Ombudsman