

## **The complaint**

Mr M complains Wise Payments Limited trading as Wise didn't do enough to protect him when he fell victim to a job scam.

## **What happened**

Mr M had an account with Wise which he opened in March 2020. His account has since been closed.

Mr M says she was contacted by someone on a well-known messaging app asking him if he was interested in a remote working opportunity. He said he was and had the job and what it involved explained to him – essentially completing tasks and earning money and commission for doing so. He was told he'd need a cryptocurrency wallet in order to do the job. Mr M was, in fact, speaking to scammers.

Between 11 and 14 December 2023, Mr M says he sent just over £6,000 to the scammers from his account with Wise. At that point Wise blocked his account, and it's since been closed. Mr M tried sending more money to the scammers using another of his accounts after his account with Wise was blocked. But says he realised he'd been scammed after Wise blocked his account.

Mr M complained to Wise saying that it had allowed him to send just over £6,000 to scammers. Wise looked into Mr M's complaint and said that it couldn't refund him. Mr M was unhappy with Wise's response and so complained to our service.

One of our investigators looked into Mr M's complaint and said that as the payments he'd made wouldn't have appeared unusual to Wise it had no reason to intervene. They also said that Wise had stopped five of the payments and asked Mr M why he was making them, and he'd given misleading responses. So, they thought that this also prevented Wise from helping. Finally, they said that Wise had no reason to have concerns about the receiving accounts either. So, they didn't uphold Mr M's complaint.

Mr M was unhappy with our investigator's recommendations saying that so many payments in such a short space of time should have been a cause for concern and should have led to an intervention by Wise. In the circumstances, he asked for his complaint to be referred to an ombudsman for a decision. His complaint was, 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.

In this case I'm satisfied that Mr M made eight payments to six different beneficiaries between 11 and 14 December 2023.

The first three payments were all for under £150. I agree with our investigator that payments as small as that wouldn't be concerning.

The next two payments were for £850 or less. Again, those wouldn't be large enough to be concerning. Nor in this case would I say that the fact that Mr M had made payments to three different beneficiaries would be concerning.

The next two payments were for £2,600 and £1,300. Had that been a payment identifiably to cryptocurrency, I would be inclined to say that these two payments, taken together with the others that day, could have been large enough to be concerning. But they weren't. They were payments to merchants selling cryptocurrency – peer to peer sellers – and this wouldn't have been obvious. In addition, I agree with our investigator that Wise stopped the first, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh payments and asked Mr M why he was making them – he gave misleading responses which resulted in proportionate warnings that wouldn't have made Mr M stop and think because he'd not told Wise the real reason why he was making the payments. Having seen chat between Mr M and the scammers, I can see the scammers were guiding Mr M through warnings to reduce the chance of their scam being spotted.

Given everything I've said, I agree that Wise didn't miss an opportunity to prevent loss here. I agree also that this isn't a complaint I can uphold.

## **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 M to accept or reject my decision before 24 December 2024.

Nicolas Atkinson  
**Ombudsman**