

The complaint

Ms O is being represented by solicitors. She's complaining about Revolut Ltd because it declined to refund money she lost as a result of fraud.

What happened

Sadly, Ms O fell victim to a cruel job scam after she was contacted on social media. As part of the scam, she made two payments for £1,000 each to two different cryptocurrency exchanges on 11 October 2023.

Our investigator didn't recommend the complaint be upheld. They felt Revolut took appropriate steps to warn Ms O of the possibility she was being scammed.

Ms O didn't accept the investigator's assessment and her representative said Revolut should have known payments to cryptocurrency carry a higher risk of being associated with scams and asked more questions about these payments. If it had called her, it believes the scam would have been uncovered and her losses prevented.

The complaint has now been referred to me for review.

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 conclusions as the investigator, and for broadly the same reasons. I haven't necessarily commented on every single point raised but concentrated instead on the issues I believe are central to the outcome of the complaint. This is consistent with our established role as an informal alternative to the courts. In considering this complaint I've had regard to the relevant law and regulations; any regulator's rules, guidance and standards, codes of practice, and what I consider was good industry practice at the time.

There's no dispute that Ms O authorised these payments. In broad terms, the starting position at law is that an Electronic Money Institution (EMI) such as Revolut is expected to process payments a customer authorises it to make, in accordance with the Payment Services Regulations and the terms and conditions of their account. In this context, *'authorised'* essentially means the customer gave the business an instruction to make a payment from their account. In other words, they knew that money was leaving their account, irrespective of where that money actually went.

Revolut also has a duty to exercise reasonable skill and care, pay due regard to the interests of its customers and to follow good industry practice to keep customers' accounts safe. This includes identifying vulnerable consumers who may be particularly susceptible to scams and looking out for payments which might indicate the consumer is at risk of financial harm.

Taking these things into account, I need to decide whether Revolut acted fairly and reasonably in its dealings with Ms O.

The payments

One of the key features of a Revolut account is that it facilitates payments that sometimes involve large amounts and/or the purchase of cryptocurrency. I must take into account that many similar payment instructions it receives will be entirely legitimate. I'm also conscious this was a new account and there was no history of past activity against which these payments might have looked suspicious.

Having considered what Revolut knew about the first payment at the time, I'm not persuaded it ought to have been particularly concerned about it. The amount was relatively low and when Ms O opened the account she had selected the purchase of cryptocurrency as one of the reasons for doing so. So I don't think this payment would have been unexpected and I can't say Revolut was at fault for processing it in line with her instructions.

While the second payment was for the same amount, it was the second payment to cryptocurrency on that day and it appears Revolut did identify a risk and it showed a series of generic scam warnings. Having thought carefully about the risk this payment presented, I'm satisfied this was a broadly proportionate response. I note Ms O's representative believes Revolut should have called her to discuss the payment in person but I don't think that level of response was warranted on this occasion.

I want to be clear that it's not my intention to suggest Ms O is to blame for what happened in any way. She fell victim to a sophisticated scam that was carefully designed to deceive and manipulate its victims. I can understand why she acted in the way she did. But my role is to consider the actions of Revolut and, having done so, I'm not persuaded these were the cause of her losses.

Recovery of funds

I've also looked at whether Revolut could or should have done more to try and recover Ms O's losses once it was aware that the payments were the result of fraud.

Ms O transferred funds to legitimate cryptocurrency accounts in her own name. From there, she purchased cryptocurrency and moved it onto a wallet address of her choosing (albeit on the scammers' instructions). Revolut could only try to recover the funds from Ms O's own account and it appears all the money had already been moved on and, if not, anything that was left would still have been available to her to access.

As the payments outlined above were card payments, I've considered whether Revolut should have tried to recover the money through the chargeback scheme. But I'd only expect it to have raised a chargeback claim if it was likely to be successful and it doesn't appear that would have been the case here. The payments went to legitimate cryptocurrency exchanges that provided the service requested of them – that of changing Ms O's money into cryptocurrency before sending it to the wallet address she supplied it with. Ms O's disagreement is with the scammer, not the cryptocurrency exchanges and it wouldn't have been possible for Revolut to process a chargeback claim against the scammer as she didn't pay them directly.

In the circumstances, I don't think anything that Revolut could have done differently would likely have led to these payments being successfully recovered.

In conclusion

I recognise Ms O has been the victim of a cruel scam and I'm sorry she lost this money. I realise the outcome of this complaint will come as a great disappointment but, for the reasons I've explained, I think Revolut acted fairly and reasonably in its dealings with her and I won't be telling it to make any refund.

My final decision

My final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Ms O to accept or reject my decision before 18 August 2025.

James Biles
Ombudsman