

The complaint

Mr P complains that Monzo Bank Ltd won't refund the money he lost when he was the victim of a scam.

What happened

In November 2023, Mr P was looking for a way to earn some extra income and came across an advert on a social media website for an advertising company offering work. He clicked on a link in the advert and was then contacted by someone from the company who explained that the job involved reviewing hotels online.

Mr P was given access to the advertising company's platform, where he could see the tasks he could complete and the commission he had earned. And he was shown how to purchase cryptocurrency, which he would use to pay for some of the tasks he was to complete. Mr P then made a number of payments from his Monzo account to purchase cryptocurrency, which he then sent on to wallet details he was given for the company.

I've set out the payments Mr P made from his Monzo account below:

Date	Details	Amount
26 November 2023	To 1 st payee	£40
27 November 2023	To 2 nd payee	£20
28 November 2023	To 3 rd payee	£100
28 November 2023	To 4 th payee	£40
29 November 2023	To 3 rd payee	£120
5 December 2023	To 5 th payee	£1,310
6 December 2023	To 6 th payee	£850
16 December 2023	To 7 th payee	£900
22 December 2023	To 8 th payee	£800
27 December 2023	To 8 th payee	£316

Unfortunately, we now know the advertising company and the job were a scam. The scam was uncovered after Mr P was told he had to pay increasingly large amounts of money before he could complete the tasks he was given and withdraw the profit the platform showed he had made. Mr P then realised he had been the victim of a scam, reported the payments to Monzo and asked it to refund the money he had lost.

Monzo investigated but said it had shown Mr P warnings and executed the payments in line with his instructions. It didn't think it had breached any duty it owed to Mr P, so didn't agree to refund any of the money he had lost. Mr P wasn't satisfied with Monzo's response, so referred a complaint to our service.

One of our investigators looked at the complaint. They didn't think we would have expected Monzo to do anything further to protect Mr P here, so didn't think it would be fair to require it to refund the money he had lost. Mr P disagreed with our investigator, so the complaint has been 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.

Banks are expected to make payments in line with their customers' instructions. And Mr P accepts he made the payments here. So while I recognise he didn't intend for the money to ultimately go to scammers, he did authorise the payments. And so the starting position in law is that Monzo was obliged to follow his instructions and make the payments. So Mr P isn't automatically entitled to a refund.

The regulatory landscape, along with good industry practice, sets out requirements for banks to protect their customers from fraud and financial harm. So, in line with this, I think Monzo should fairly and reasonably:

- Have been monitoring accounts and any payments made or received to counter various risks, including anti-money laundering, countering the financing of terrorism, and preventing fraud and scams.
- Have had systems in place to look out for unusual transactions or other signs that might indicate that its customers were at risk of fraud (among other things). This is particularly so given the increase in sophisticated fraud and scams in recent years, which account providers are generally more familiar with than the average customer.
- In some circumstances, irrespective of the payment channel used, have taken additional steps, or made additional checks, before processing a payment, or in some cases declined to make a payment altogether, to help protect customers from the possibility of financial harm from fraud.

So I've considered whether Monzo should have identified that Mr P was at heightened risk of financial harm from fraud as a result of any of the payments he made here.

But the payments Mr P made here weren't for particularly large amounts, or for amounts where I would have expected Monzo to identify them as suspicious based on their size alone. The payments were also made to a number of different payees, so weren't obviously connected. And they fluctuated up and down in size, there were gaps of several days between some of them, and they didn't leave the balance of Mr P's account at a particularly unusual level, so the payments didn't form a pattern of behaviour I'd have expected Monzo to identify as particularly suspicious either.

And while the last two payments Mr P made, to the 8th payee, were potentially identifiably related to cryptocurrency, not all payments related to cryptocurrency will necessarily be connected to a scam. And these payments were relatively low in value, didn't form a suspicious pattern of behaviour, and there wasn't anything else about them that I think ought to have caused Monzo significant concern.

So I don't think it's unreasonable that Monzo didn't identify that Mr P could be at heightened risk of financial harm from fraud as a result of any of these payments. And so I don't think it's unreasonable that it didn't take any further steps or carry out any additional checks before allowing the payments to go through.

I appreciate that Mr P has been the victim of a cruel and sophisticated scam and that my decision will come as a disappointment to him. He has lost a significant amount of money and I sympathise with the position he has found himself in. But I can only look at Monzo's

responsibilities and, for the reasons I've set out above, I don't think anything I would reasonably have expected it to have done would have prevented the loss he suffered. And so I don't think it would be fair to require Monzo to refund the money Mr P has lost.

My final decision

I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr P to accept or reject my decision before 4 September 2025.

Alan Millward
Ombudsman