

The complaint

Mrs B complains that Revolut Limited didn't do enough to prevent her from falling victim to a scam.

Mrs B has used a representative to bring her complaint, but for ease of reading, I'll mostly just refer to Mrs B herself where I mean both her and the representative.

What happened

The detailed background to this complaint is well known to both parties. So, I'll only provide a brief overview of some of the key events here. In 2023, Mrs B says she was the victim of a scam. She saw an advert online for an investment which was endorsed by a celebrity figure. She provided her details and was contacted by an account manager. At the time Mrs B believed she was investing and trading in cryptocurrency and other assets. She was provided with access to a platform where she could see her 'trades', but she later discovered it was a scam.

As a result of the scam she made payments from her bank 'N' to an account she'd opened with Revolut. Some of the money that was sent to the scam was from loans and some was Mrs B's savings. And from the Revolut account she made the following payments which she says were all lost to the scam, all the payments were to cryptocurrency exchanges.

Payment Number	Date	Method / Beneficiary	Amount
1	15 August 2023	Card payment to B	£1,300
2	15 August 2023	Card payment to B	£1,000
3	25 August 2023	Card payment to B	£3,400
4	25 August 2023	Card payment to B	£3,700
5	25 August 2023	Card payment to B	£2,900
6	25 August 2023	Faster payment to M	£9,000
7	29 August 2023	Faster payment to M	£6,000
8	20 September 2023	Faster payment to P	£17,918
9	13 November 2023	Faster payment to P	£13,000

In April 2024 Mrs B complained to Revolut. In summary she didn't think they'd done enough to protect her from the scam. Revolut didn't think they'd done anything wrong and didn't uphold the complaint. The matter was referred to our service and one of our Investigators didn't recommend it should be upheld. He concluded that Revolut ought to have gone further in the warnings they gave at the times of some of the payments, but he wasn't persuaded this would've made a difference. Mrs B doesn't accept this and has asked for an Ombudsman to review her complaint.

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 outcome as our Investigator and for similar reasons. I know this will be incredibly disappointing for Mrs B, so I'll explain why.

I'm also aware of and have familiarised myself with the circumstances of Mrs B's linked complaints about N and a loan company. But this decision is solely about the actions of Revolut. I accept that Mrs B has been the victim of a cruel and callous scam. But that doesn't automatically entitle her to a refund from Revolut. It would only be fair for me to direct Revolut to make a payment if I think they are responsible for errors which caused the loss or a part of it (or it is otherwise fair and reasonable that they do so).

Revolut should do all they can to protect their customers from fraud and scams. And by 2023 (when Mrs B made her payments) they knew or should've known that payments to cryptocurrency exchanges can represent an increased risk of fraud and scams. Revolut intervened in the payments Mrs B made and forced her into a chat with their agents in relation to payments six and eight which were for £9,000 and £17,918 respectively.

Potentially due to the way in which Mrs B had answered some questions about her payments, Revolut focussed on warnings about the potential for a 'safe account' scam. But the payments were identifiably going to cryptocurrency exchanges. And whilst I acknowledge the purchase of cryptocurrency is an increasingly popular choice, they also would've known that it is also a common feature in many scams.

So I agree with our Investigator that Revolut ought to have asked questions and have provided warnings about cryptocurrency. They had already identified that she might be at risk of financial harm and should have probed and provided warnings about common cryptocurrency scams. But I also have to think about what would've happened if they'd done so.

I've seen evidence from the linked complaint about N which supports that Mrs B wasn't truthful with them when they questioned the payments she was making to her Revolut account. She gave reasons such as to support family with home improvements when this wasn't the case. I've also seen evidence in the message history between Mrs B and the scammer where she is being guided and directed as to how to reply to messages from Revolut. Mrs B wouldn't have been able to tell Revolut her payments were for home improvements as that wouldn't have made sense when Revolut could have seen they were going to cryptocurrency. But I still think Mrs B would have answered in such a way that it would've reassured Revolut and the payments would've continued.

There are other common features of scams that Mrs B was warned about by Revolut, albeit that the main basis of their warning was around 'safe account' scams. Specifically, the risks of using remote access / screen sharing software and that no genuine firm would direct her as to how to respond to a chat with her bank (or EMI like Revolut). Revolut said that if this was happening, it was a scam and Mrs B should let them know immediately. These warnings were both applicable to Mrs B's situation and didn't make a difference. So, on balance, I'm not persuaded further investment / cryptocurrency warnings would have caused her to have acted differently at the time.

Mrs B's representative has said that at the times of the payments, she wasn't aware they were going towards cryptocurrency and believed they were going to fund her trading account and or provide insurance fees for her investment. I've considered this but I don't agree. In some of her messages to the scammer Mrs B said: *"Revolut have asked me how I found [K] to use for crypto. I said I trained myself during pandemic from various sources."* And other messages include screenshots from cryptocurrency exchanges showing the purchase of

cryptocurrency. So whilst I accept Mrs B was misled about what the cryptocurrency was for (to fund her trading account etc), I don't agree Mrs B didn't know it is what she was purchasing at the time.

Mrs B has also said that due to her personal and family circumstances, she was vulnerable at the time of the scam. I'm sorry to hear of Mrs B's difficult circumstances, but I can't see that this is something Revolut were aware of prior to the discovery of the scam (or that this is something they reasonably should have ascertained). So I can't fairly criticise them for not having done anything differently on that basis.

The weight of the evidence shows that at the relevant times Mrs B was prepared to conceal the true purpose and nature of her payments. She was also guided by scammers as to how to respond. And for these reasons, even if Revolut had done all I think they should have (in relation to any of her payments), I don't think this would've prevented Mrs B making the payments she did or that it would've resulted in discovery of the scam.

I've also considered Revolut's actions and attempts to recover Mrs B's money once they were made aware of the situation. For the same reasons our Investigator has already shared, I don't think there was anything they reasonably could've done to assist. For the transfers, the beneficiary banks didn't respond to contact from Revolut. And the card payments wouldn't have had any prospect of a successful chargeback as the cryptocurrency exchanges would've provided the service requested of them.

I'm sorry Mrs B has been a victim as she has. And, as I've mentioned above, I understand she has some very challenging personal circumstances. But ultimately the primary responsibility for her loss rests with the cruel scammers who perpetrated the crime against her. And for the reasons I've set out, as I don't think Revolut are responsible for errors which caused her loss (or reasonably could've prevented it), there isn't a fair and reasonable basis upon which I can require them to do more to resolve this complaint.

My final decision

For the reasons outlined above, my final decision is that I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs B to accept or reject my decision before 3 March 2025.

Richard Annandale
Ombudsman