

The complaint

Mr C complains Revolut Ltd didn't do enough to protect him when he fell victim to a cryptocurrency investment scam.

What happened

Mr C has an account with Revolut which he opened in October 2021. He also has accounts with businesses who I'll refer to as "T" and "S" throughout the rest of this decision.

Mr C says he was introduced to a trading group by a woman he'd met online who he considered to be a good friend – he was looking to invest at the time. He says he thought the group was genuine having done some research online and having been added to a group chat. He says he was told to open a trading account and told that he'd need to make payments from his accounts to a cryptocurrency exchange and then transfer the cryptocurrency he bought to another wallet in order to invest. He was, in fact, speaking to scammers.

Mr C says he started making payments in September 2022 and could see his investment growing. He says he made over 40 payments totalling just over £90,000 between October 2022 and November 2023 from his account with Revolut to cryptocurrency for onward investment. Towards the end of the scam, he was told his investment was worth over £500,000. He says he tried to withdraw his money and was told he'd have to pay various fees. He says he never received his money, just excuse after excuse. He ultimately realised he'd been scammed.

Mr C complained to Revolut in February 2024 with the help of a representative saying that Revolut should have intervened when he made a payment of £7,000 to cryptocurrency on 7 February 2023. Mr C's representative told Revolut that Mr C was vulnerable to scams at the time through chronic stress and anxiety. He also complained to T.

Revolut says it asked Mr C to provide details and evidence of the scam as he'd not reported it before. In the meantime, it said it couldn't uphold his complaint. Mr C ended up complaining to our service about Revolut and T.

One of our investigators looked into both of Mr C's complaints. They didn't recommend that his complaint against Revolut be upheld saying that [what]. They didn't recommend that his complaint against T be upheld either. Mr C was unhappy with our investigator's recommendations and asked for their complaints to be referred to an ombudsman for a decision. Both 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.

Mr C's representatives originally sent a list of payments that they said were scam payments that started in March 2022. They've since confirmed that those earlier payments were not

part of a scam. The scam payments started in September 2022. Shortly after that – in October 2022 – one of Mr C's banks, namely S, stopped sending payments to cryptocurrency. Mr C had been sending his payments from T to S and then onto cryptocurrency before then – because T also blocked payments to cryptocurrency – so instead starting sending his payments via Revolut.

Mr C's representatives have said that Revolut should have identified a £7,000 payment Mr C made to cryptocurrency on 7 February 2022 as unusual or suspicious. I'm inclined to agree, although I do note that Mr C had been sending payments to the same cryptocurrency provider for over three months by that stage without issue. I also, however, agree with our investigator that ultimately that wouldn't have made a difference. I say that because I agree with our investigator that on other occasions when banks intervened Mr C didn't disclose the information that Revolut would have needed to uncover the scam – quite the opposite. I also agree that Mr C had been warned by others that he was being scammed – and had doubts himself – but still went ahead with more payments suggesting he was “under the spell”.

Given everything I've just said, I agree that this isn't a complaint I can uphold. I appreciate that Mr C has lost a lot of money and has fallen victim to a cruel scam.

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 C to accept or reject my decision before 23 December 2024.

Nicolas Atkinson
Ombudsman