

The complaint

Mr M complains that Wise Payments Limited trading as Wise didn't do enough to prevent him losing money to a scam.

What happened

The detailed background to this complaint is well known to both parties. So, I'll only provide an overview of some of the key events here. In February 2024 Mr M says he was the victim of a scam. He says he was looking for work and was approached about an opportunity which involved providing reviews for hotels online in return for which he'd receive commission. He was persuaded to pursue this and was told he'd have to make payments before his money could be released to him. Mr M says he funded his Wise account from his account with 'S' (a bank) before making the outgoing payments.

Below are a list of the outgoing transfers that Mr M says he made as a result of the scam.

Date	Event / Notes	Amount
6 February 2024	Payment to 'O' (Wise UK Account)	£46.33
7 February 2024	Payment to 'O2' (Wise UK Account)	£45
7 February 2024	Payment to 'O2' (Wise UK Account)	£34
8 February 2024	Payment to 'L' (Wise UK Account)	£52
8 February 2024	Payment to 'L' (Wise UK Account)	£132
8 February 2024	Payment to 'L' (Wise UK Account)	£35
9 February 2024	Payment to 'S' (Wise UK Account)	£197
9 February 2024	Payment to 'T' (Wise USA Account)	£461
9 February 2024	Payment to 'T' (Wise USA Account)	£1,307

During the above time period there were also some modest credits to the account made as part of the scam, which reassured Mr M that it was a genuine opportunity. But overall, Mr M is still at a loss. Further payments were also made towards the same scam from another account Mr M had opened with 'R'.

When Mr M realised he'd been a victim of a scam, he reported this to the businesses involved. Our service has already considered a complaint about S which wasn't upheld. And I'm also considering Mr M's complaint about R which arises from the same overall scam. In response to Mr M's report that his payments had been made as a result of a scam, Wise

didn't offer any redress. Mr M complained, he thinks Wise should've done more to protect him including their actions in relation to the recipient accounts that they provided.

One of our Investigators looked into the complaint and didn't think we could consider all of it. He pointed out that the account with T wasn't provided by Wise Payments Limited, and so Mr T couldn't complain to them about that account.

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

It isn't in dispute that Mr M made the payments from his Wise account (albeit that he didn't know he was being tricked at the time). And usually Mr M would be responsible for the payments he makes. But Wise should also be on the look out for customers who are at risk and should do what they can to prevent fraud and scams.

In the circumstances of this complaint, I don't think it was unreasonable for Wise to process Mr M's payment instructions without doing more than they did. The payments weren't of particularly high value, there was no previous account activity against which they might have appeared unusual. And the payment pattern isn't so indicative of a potential fraud or scam such that I think Wise should've done more.

There is a balance to be struck between stopping and checking payments and allowing customers ready access to their funds. But in this case, I don't think Wise got that balance wrong. I acknowledge that Wise did ask Mr M some questions about the payments he was making. Mr M said that the payments were being made for 'goods and services'. And Wise provided some warnings about payments of that nature. In the circumstances here, I think that was a proportionate response to the payment instructions Mr M had provided. So overall, I don't think there were any failings by Wise in allowing the payments to be processed at the time.

I've also seen that by the time Mr M reported his payments as having been made as a result of a scam, that no funds remained to be returned from the accounts he'd paid. So I don't think there were failures by Wise in that regard.

I've also considered Wise's actions in relation to the UK beneficiary accounts that they provided. In each case I'm satisfied that Wise took appropriate documentation and conducted checks before opening each account. I'm not persuaded they could've known, when opening the accounts, that they would later go on to be used in connection with a fraud or scam.

I've also considered the activity on the recipient accounts. And I don't think there were any failures in account monitoring which were causal to the losses Mr M has suffered. Similarly, there was nothing so suspicious or indicative of a potential scam which means I think Wise ought to have intervened in the arrival or have prevented the spending of Mr M's funds from each account that Wise Payments Limited provided.

I accept Mr M has been the victim of a cruel scam, and I'm sorry to hear he lost the money he did. But as I don't think this is something Wise are responsible for, there isn't a 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 Mr M to accept or reject my decision before 16 June 2025.

Richard Annandale
Ombudsman