

## The complaint

Mr Q complains that Revolut Ltd did not reimburse the funds he lost to a scam.

## What happened

Mr Q met an individual on a dating app, I will refer to them as X. He began messaging with X outside of the dating app and they build a connection. They also talked about trading in cryptocurrency, which Mr Q had already been interested in and doing for around a year and a half. X appeared to be very knowledgeable about cryptocurrency trading and mining, and told Mr Q about a coin that was certified by the US government, but was in the testing stage so not much information was available about it online. Eventually, Mr Q began investing in the coin, and made the following transfers from his Revolut account to a cryptocurrency merchant:

Date	Amount
29/06/2021	£20.00
29/06/2021	£800.00
01/07/2021	£1,500.00
02/07/2021	£2,500.00
03/07/2021	£3,600.00
03/07/2021	£850.00
13/07/2021	£700.00
13/07/2021	£100.00
14/07/2021	£2,000.00
15/07/2021	£13,300.00
16/07/2021	£5,500.00
16/07/2021	£1,500.00
16/07/2021	£6,550.00
16/07/2021	£250.00
16/07/2021	£250.00
21/07/2021	£3,900.00
23/07/2021	£1,000.00
25/07/2021	£1,300.00
26/07/2021	£920.00
26/07/2021	£83.00
28/07/2021	£2,340.00
28/07/2021	£100.00
29/07/2021	£1,480.00
04/08/2021	£2,300.00

After some time, Mr Q attempted to withdraw some of his funds from the platform, but was told he needed to deposit even more before he could do so. Mr Q was unable to afford this and eventually felt that he had been dealing with scam platforms, and that X may be involved.

Mr Q raised a scam claim with Revolut in July 2024. Due to the time that had elapsed, Revolut were unable to recover any of the funds. And as the funds had gone to another

account in Mr Q's name and under his control, they did not agree that they needed to reimburse him in the circumstances.

Mr Q referred his complaint to our service and our Investigator looked into it. They felt the scam transactions were not particularly out of character when compared to Mr Q's genuine account activity, as he had been trading and exchanging funds to cryptocurrency for some time prior to the scam occurring. While they felt a tailored scam warning for the £13,300 payment was reasonable, they did not think this alone would have been enough to break the spell of the scam.

Mr Q's representative disagreed with the findings. They felt the payment of £13,300 was out of character for Mr Q and also highlighted that he made more payments the following day totalling just over £14,000. So, they felt human intervention was warranted.

As an informal agreement could not be reached, the complaint has been passed to me for a final decision.

### **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.

In deciding what's fair and reasonable in all the circumstances of a complaint, I'm required to take into account relevant: law and regulations; regulators' rules, guidance and standards; codes of practice; and, where appropriate, what I consider to be good industry practice at the time.

Broadly speaking, the starting position in law is that an account provider is expected to process payments and withdrawals that a customer authorises it to make, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the account. And a customer will then be responsible for the transactions that they have authorised.

It's not in dispute here that Mr Q authorised the payments in question as he believed they were part of a legitimate investment. So, while I recognise that he didn't intend the money to go to scammers, the starting position in law is that Revolut was obliged to follow Mr Q's instruction and process the payments. Because of this, he is not automatically entitled to a refund.

The regulatory landscape, along with good industry practice, also sets out a requirement for account providers to protect their customers from fraud and financial harm. And this includes monitoring accounts to look out for activity that might suggest a customer was at risk of financial harm, intervening in unusual or out of character transactions and trying to prevent customers falling victims to scams. So, I've also thought about whether Revolut did enough to try to keep Mr Q's account safe.

I have reviewed Mr Q's account statements and compared the scam payments to his genuine account activity. In doing so, I can see that Mr Q had begun buying and selling cryptocurrency in around November 2019, over a year and half before the scam started. And he had also traded with companies who deal in stocks and shares.

In the six months leading up to the scam, Mr Q made a number of high value exchanges to various currencies, both FIAT and crypto. Mr Q not only exchanged funds into cryptocurrency within Revolut, he also carried out trades on the platform with his funds. Over the course of two days in February 2021, he exchanged £30,000 into cryptocurrency on the Revolut platform, and this was following credits to his account from a trading merchant for

£28,000. In April 2021, he made more exchanges to cryptocurrency and also sent £10,000 in one transaction to a trading merchant.

I accept that some of the payments to the scam were high value, in particular the £13,300 payment on 15 July 2021, and that the overall frequency of the payments at times was relatively high. However, when this activity is compared to the genuine account activity described above, it is not so out of character or suspicious that I think it warranted human intervention. On balance, I think that a tailored warning for the £13,300 payment was reasonable for the risk level the payment posed in the wider context of the account as a whole.

I've considered whether a tailored warning could have reasonably uncovered the scam and prevented further payments from being made. In doing so, I have considered that this was not only an investment scam but also had elements of a romance scam. I say this because Mr Q met X on a dating app and by the time of the £13,300 payment, they had built up a friendship as well as a romantic relationship. They talked often about their daily lives and about meeting up with each other in the future. So, I do not think Mr Q would have seen X as an advisor or felt that she was guiding him in how to trade in cryptocurrency.

I would have expected Revolut to warn Mr Q about key features of cryptocurrency investment scams. These can include but are not limited to, a celebrity endorsing the investment, finding it on social media, an advisor or broker guiding him on how to carry out trades and returns that are too good to be true. As explained above, I think it is unlikely Mr Q would have considered X an advisor or broker, so I don't think the warnings related to that aspect of the scam would have resonated with him.

I also have to consider that Mr Q had already been investing in cryptocurrency for around a year and a half before the scam occurred. Looking at the chats with the scammer, Mr Q had knowledge and experience of crypto mining, which the scam appeared to be related to. Because of this, I think it is unlikely that a warning from Revolut about cryptocurrency investment scams would have resonated as strongly with Mr Q, as he appeared to be confident in his ability to trade in cryptocurrency. As set out above, I do not think this scam had all of the typical hallmarks of a cryptocurrency investment scam so on balance, I think it is unlikely a warning from Revolut would have been enough to uncover the scam in the circumstances.

I understand that this will be very disappointing for Mr Q, and I recognise that he has been the victim of a cruel and manipulative scam. But I do not consider that it would be fair to hold Revolut responsible for his loss, so I won't be asking it to refund any of that loss to him.

### **My final decision**

I do not uphold Mr Q's complaint against Revolut Ltd.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr Q to accept or reject my decision before 23 July 2025..

Rebecca Norris

**Ombudsman**