DRN-5191567

The complaint

Mr M complains Bank of Scotland plc trading as Halifax won't refund the full amount of money he says he lost to a scam.

What happened

Our investigator didn't uphold the complaint. He didn't think the payment looked suspicious such that Halifax ought to have made additional checks before processing it. Our investigator also didn't find any failings by Halifax in relation to recovering the money Mr M lost.

As Mr M didn't agree with the investigator's view, the complaint has been passed to me to decide.

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.

I'm very aware that I've summarised this complaint briefly, in less detail than has been provided, and in my own words. No discourtesy is intended by this. Instead, I've focussed on what I think is the significant part here. If there's something I've not mentioned, it isn't because I've ignored it. I haven't. I'm satisfied I don't need to comment on every individual point or argument to be able to reach what I think is the right outcome. Our rules allow me to do this. This simply reflects the informal nature of our service as a free alternative to the courts.

Having taken into account longstanding regulatory expectations and requirements, and what I consider to be good industry practice, Halifax ought to have been on the look-out for the possibility of fraud and made additional checks before processing payments in some circumstances.

I have reviewed Mr M's payment he made to the scam. Having considered when it was made, its value and who it was made to, I'm not persuaded Halifax ought to have found the payment suspicious, such that it ought to have made enquires of Mr M before processing it.

I understand Mr M has said he didn't receive Halifax's email asking for more evidence to dispute the chargeback claim, but I'm satisfied I've seen information to show that it was sent by the bank. It's also worth noting that had Mr M supplied more evidence, given what the merchant had supplied, I find it most likely it wouldn't have been successful.

So, I haven't found any failings by Halifax in relation to the attempts it made to recover the money Mr M lost.

Mr M feels that Halifax should refund the money he lost due to the scam. I understand that this will have been frustrating for him. But I've thought carefully about everything that has happened, and with all the circumstances of this complaint in mind I don't think Halifax needs to pay Mr M any compensation. I realise this means Mr M is out of pocket and I'm sorry he's lost this money. However, for the reasons I've explained, I don't think I can reasonably uphold this complaint.

My final decision

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 25 September 2025.

Tom Wagstaff
Ombudsman