

## **The complaint**

Mrs C complains Monzo Bank Ltd won't refund the full amount of money she lost after she fell victim to an 'authorised push payment' ("APP") scam.

## **What happened**

Our investigator didn't uphold the complaint. Our Investigator said that even though Monzo did intervene and tell Mrs C she was being scammed, she went on to send payments to the scammer after. So Monzo was unable to prevent Mrs C losing her money.

Mrs C's representative has asked for the matter to be referred to a decision. It said the payments should've flagged as high risk, been prevented and other banks should've been put on notice that Mrs C was being scammed. So, the complaint's 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 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 heart of the matter here. If there's something I've not mentioned, it isn't because I've ignored it. 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, Monzo 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 Mrs C's account and the payments she made to the scam. I agree with the investigator that payment one would've looked suspicious given its value and that it was going to a known cryptocurrency company. So, intervention would've been appropriate.

So, I've gone on to consider what I think most likely would've happened if Monzo had intervened earlier.

Based on the value and the risk the payment would've posed at the time, I'm satisfied a proportionate intervention would've been a warning asking a series of questions to establish why Mrs C was making the payment. But, If Monzo had of given Mrs C a warning, I'm satisfied it would've unlikely prevented Mrs C from being scammed. I'll explain why.

Monzo did intervene on a payment after payment one and spoke to Mrs C. In this call the advisor told Mrs C she was being scammed and not to send any more payments. The Monzo advisor said that the bank had carried out its own research and was comfortable it was a scam company. The advisor went on to tell Mrs C not to send any more money and to withdraw any money she had already sent to her own cryptocurrency wallets. Mrs C said at that point she would move the money back to her other account. We know that shortly after that, Mrs C sent more money from that bank account to the scammer – after she had been warned.

Given we know Mrs C wasn't being accurate with the responses she was giving to the people she spoke to, and that she continued to make payments after being told she was being scammed, I don't find any earlier warning would've made any difference here. If Mrs C was unwilling to act on the advice of the advisor, I think the likelihood of her answering any automated warnings accurately or taking notice of the message to be highly unlikely.

I understand Mrs C's representative has said Mrs C should've been prevented from sending further payments. I've considered this point carefully, but I don't agree. On the call Mrs C appears to be receptive to the warning and tells the advisor that she will act by moving the money back to her main account. So, I'm satisfied that Monzo didn't need to freeze Mrs C's account to stop her sending this money.

So, in these circumstances, I'm satisfied Monzo couldn't have prevented Mrs C from losing this money to the scammer.

The rest of the payments were set to Mrs C's own account at another bank and Mrs C had told the advisor she would be making these payments, and I'm satisfied that no further intervention was required.

Mrs C's representative said Monzo should've intervened on payment one and this would've minimised her losses. Mrs C went on to make payments after she had been told she was being scammed, so I'm satisfied that even if they had intervened on payment one, Mrs C would've most likely moved the money earlier and still made the payment from her other account. We know she did this, as we have all her complaints. So, the loss wouldn't have been prevented.

I'm satisfied that recovering any of these payments wasn't possible in the circumstances, as they all went to accounts in Mrs C's name. As such, if any funds remained in these accounts, they would still be under Mrs C's control.

### **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 Mrs C to accept or reject my decision before 06 April 2025.

Tom Wagstaff  
**Ombudsman**