

The complaint

X complains that Revolut Ltd hasn't refunded the money he lost when he fell victim to a scam.

What happened

X had been looking for work, and was contacted on a mobile messaging service by someone saying they had a job offer for him. X was told this job was to do with providing online reviews for hotels. X would need to complete a set number of 'tasks' a day to earn commission. X agreed to take the job and was provided with some training and added to a group chat with others claiming to do the same work. X says he searched for information about the company he believed he was working for and was satisfied it was legitimate. Unfortunately, and unknown to him at the time, X was dealing with a scammer, there was no legitimate job.

X was told he'd need to deposit funds to unlock tasks and made various card payments into the scheme as set out below. These payments were made to a cryptocurrency wallet X had been told to open, from where the funds were passed on to the scammer:

Payment	Date	Time	Amount
Payment 1	05/05/2023	12:20	£52
Payment 2	06/05/2023	09:59	£66
Payment 3	06/05/2023	10:40	£65
Payment 4	06/05/2023	10:55	£50
Payment 5	07/05/2023	09:41	£50
Payment 6	07/05/2023	10:09	£60
Payment 7	07/05/2023	10:17	£40
Payment 8	07/05/2023	10:27	£150
Payment 9	07/05/2023	10:39	£150
Payment 10	08/05/2023	09:44	£200
Payment 11	08/05/2023	10:07	£320
Payment 11	10/05/2023	10:27	£650
Payment 12	10/05/2023	12:59	£1250
Payment 13	10/05/2023	13:02	£50
Payment 14	12/05/2023	13:49	£2000
Payment 15	12/05/2023	17:15	£5000
Payment 16	18/05/2023	12:03	£5000

Payment 17	18/05/2023	12:09	£5000
-------------------	------------	-------	-------

During this period X received credits from cryptocurrency accounts totalling £738.93.

When X was told he'd need to deposit another £15,000 before he could withdraw his full profits, he realised he had been the victim of a scam and reported the matter to Revolut.

Revolut looked into what had happened, but declined to refund any of X's loss. It said that the payments were not out of character given the account activity, and that as they were made to cryptocurrency accounts in X's own name that meant it should not be held liable for X's loss. Revolut did raise chargebacks for these payments, but while two payments were refunded as a result (for £50 and for £1,250) the remaining chargebacks failed as the payments had been made for cryptocurrency and that service had been provided. X did not accept what Revolut had said, and so referred his complaint to our service.

One of our Investigators looked into the complaint. They thought Revolut should have taken steps to intervene – by providing a written warning – at the time of Payment 15, but they did not consider that warning at that stage would have uncovered the scam. However, they felt that by the time of payment 17 more direct intervention was warranted, and they considered that the scam would have come to light if Revolut had questioned X directly at that stage. So, they recommended that Revolut refund X's loss from that final payment, but with a 50% deduction to recognise X's contributory negligence to what had happened.

X did not accept these findings, he feels that Revolut should have intervened more directly at the time of payment 15, he also does not feel it is fair for a deduction to be made for contributory negligence. Revolut also did not accept the investigator's findings, it maintains that it should not be liable for X's loss as the payments from Revolut went to a cryptocurrency account in his own name.

I issued my provisional decision on this case on 30 January 2025. Revolut did not make any further comment, but X replied (via his representatives) disagreeing with my findings. He feels that Revolut should have intervened directly at an earlier stage, and that a good quality intervention would have exposed the scam. He says that there is no evidence he was coached or told to lie to Revolut, and that while he was not wholly honest with B, as Revolut would have known the payments were going to cryptocurrency, it should have probed him further about the reason for the payments and provided appropriate warnings about relevant scams – including job scams.

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 my provisional decision I explained the following:

“Having done so, and considering some additional information we have received from another bank involved in the payment journey, I am currently considering reaching a different outcome to our investigator. I’ll explain why.

I’m satisfied that X authorised the payments that are the subject of this complaint. So as per the Payment Service Regulations 2017 (which are the relevant regulations in place here) that means X is responsible for them. That remains the case even though X was the unfortunate victim of a scam.

Because of this, X is not automatically entitled to a refund. But 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.

Taking the above into consideration, I need to decide whether Revolut acted fairly and reasonably in its dealings with X, or whether it should have done more than it did.

In this case, I agree with our Investigator that the early payments X made to the scam – which were for relatively low values – would not have been unusual enough in the context of X’s account to have merited any intervention. I do though agree that by the time of Payment 15 – which was for £5,000 – enough was going on that Revolut should have taken steps to intervene. By this time there was an established pattern of increasing payments to a cryptocurrency provider, and Revolut would have known that this might be an indication that X could be at risk of a scam.

In my view that intervention should have been in the form of a written warning. And, given that Revolut would have been aware that the payments were being made to cryptocurrency accounts I think that written warning should have focussed on the most common cryptocurrency scams at that time, investment scams. But as X was falling victim to a job task scam, I don’t think it’s likely that such a warning would have uncovered the scam.

I also agree with our investigator there should have been more direct intervention later in the scam, at the time of Payment 17. By this stage, as well as the earlier payments, X had now attempted two payments to a cryptocurrency provider in the space of ten minutes, with a total value of £10,000. So, I think it would have been reasonable for Revolut to make direct contact with X at this stage, likely via the in-app chat as X does appear to have used the Revolut app, to establish the circumstances surrounding this payment.

However, I’ve seen some information about an interaction X had with another bank, B, from which he made a transfer to Revolut to fund the scam. This interaction was in the form of a phone call, to discuss a payment for £5,000 X was attempting to make to Revolut on 12 May 2023.

I’ve listened to the call that X had with B, and it is clear that he was not being honest about what he was making the payment for. He told B that the money was going to be used to surprise his wife, which is why he was moving it out of his account with B, as he said his wife had some oversight of that account. We know that this was not true, the funds were intended to fund X’s payments to his ‘job’, so it seems that X was taking steps to conceal what he was doing from B. But it’s unclear why he would be doing this, X hasn’t explained why he was dishonest with B, and it’s not clear why he would feel the need to conceal the reason for the payments given that he apparently believed he was making payments for a legitimate job.

I think it is reasonable to conclude that X was likely acting on the instructions of the scammer here, as I cannot see any other reasonable explanation for why he was concealing the purpose of the payment he was trying to make.

With this in mind, I don't think I can fairly and reasonably conclude that direct intervention from Revolut at the time of Payment 17 (or even earlier) would have uncovered this scam. X seems to have been willing to mislead B regarding the reason for his payments, and I think it is more likely than not that he would have done the same had Revolut made contact with him. I appreciate that X would not have been able to use the same story, given that his payments from Revolut were going to cryptocurrency, but given his apparent willingness to conceal the reason for the payment, I think it is very unlikely that he would have told Revolut he was making payments for a job. So, it is more likely than not that Revolut would have continued to provide warnings about the most common cryptocurrency scams at that time – investment scams – which as noted above would not have resonated with X. With this in mind, I don't consider that Revolut missed an opportunity to protect X from this scam or to prevent his loss.

I've also thought about whether Revolut did all it could to try to recover X's funds when he told it of the scam. But given that the payments X made were to purchase cryptocurrency I don't consider there is anything more Revolut could have done to recover those funds.

I'm sorry to disappoint X as I know that he has lost a large amount of money, and my provisional findings are a significant departure from the findings set out by our Investigator. But, overall, I'm currently satisfied that any reasonable, proportionate intervention from Revolut would likely not have prevented X from making further payments to the scam. So, I do not currently intend to find that Revolut should reasonably be held liable for any of X's loss."

I've thought carefully about what X has said in response to these findings. But while I can understand why he feels the way he does, I remain satisfied that any proportionate intervention from Revolut would not have exposed this scam. X has said there is no evidence he was coached by the scammer or told to lie, but we do not have copies of any correspondence between X and the scammer, so I must base my conclusions on the evidence I do have. And that evidence shows that X was not honest with B when he was questioned about the payments he was making.

As I said in my provisional decision, I acknowledge that X would have to have explained why the payments were going to cryptocurrency if he had been questioned by Revolut. But given that I am satisfied he was choosing to conceal the true reason for the payments – and one can only assume that is because he was being told to do so by the scammers, as I can see no other reason why he would conceal what he was doing if he thought this was a legitimate job opportunity – I don't think I can fairly say that any questioning by Revolut would have led to it discovering that X was making these payments as part of a job.

X has suggested that Revolut should have warned him about job scams in any case, but unless it had been given any indication that he was making the payments as part of some kind of employment, I think it is reasonable that it would have provided him with a more general cryptocurrency warning, which at that time would have been focussed on investment scams. I acknowledge that X has identified various other decisions from our service where we have said banks should have warned about job scams, but we look at every case on its individual merits. And in this case, I am satisfied that it is unlikely X would have suggested to Revolut that he was making payments as part of a job, I therefore don't think it could be expected to have warned him about that type of scam.

So, I remain satisfied that direct intervention from Revolut – at any stage – would most likely not have uncovered this scam or prevented X from making further payments. It follows that I won't be asking Revolut to refund any of X's loss.

My final decision

I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask X to accept or reject my decision before 20 March 2025.

Sophie Mitchell
Ombudsman