

## **The complaint**

Mrs F is complaining that Revolut Ltd aren't refunding the payments she made when she fell victim to a scam.

## **What happened**

The background of this complaint is well known to all parties, so I won't repeat everything here.

Mrs F met someone on a dating app in July 2024 who I will refer to as "the scammer". They began to communicate regularly, building what she believed to be a relationship.

After several weeks, the scammer advised Mrs F that he was working on a project in Guernsey and had run out of money. He convinced Mrs F to purchase gift cards on his behalf between 19 August 2024 and 27 August 2024. Mrs F has said she provided the details of the gift cards to the scammer who then used the funds available on them. The scammer provided reasons on why he needed to borrow money. Mrs F has also said he provided her with documentation supporting these reasons, which made her believe he was telling the truth.

The scammer told Mrs F she would be paid back on 27 August 2024. She realised she had been scammed when this didn't happen. Mrs F has said she has lost £950 as a result of the scam.

Mrs F raised a complaint with Revolut in September 2024. Revolut didn't think it had done anything wrong by allowing the payments to go through. So, Mrs F brought her complaint to our service.

Our Investigator looked into the complaint but didn't uphold it. Our Investigator didn't think the payments Mrs F made were unusual and so they didn't feel Revolut should have identified a scam risk. Mrs F didn't agree. She said, in summary, that she wasn't happy with the outcome. She also explained that she was a victim and had heard that firms put aside money to help people who had fallen for the same type of scam as her.

Mrs F's complaint has now been passed to me for review and a 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.

I'm sorry Mrs F has been the victim of a scam and lost money as a result of it. And I don't underestimate the impact this has had on her. But while I know this will come as a disappointment to Mrs F, for similar reasons as our Investigator, I don't think Revolut has acted unfairly by not refunding her loss. I'll explain why.

Revolut isn't signed up to the Contingent Reimbursement Model Code which can offer a potential means of obtaining a refund following Authorised Push Payment scams. I've therefore considered whether Revolut should reimburse Mrs F under any of their other obligations.

In broad terms, the starting position at law is that an Electronic Money Institution ("EMI") such as Revolut is expected to process payments and withdrawals that a customer authorises it to make, in accordance with the Payment Services Regulations (in this case the 2017 regulations) and the terms and conditions of the customer's account.

But, taking into account relevant law, regulators rules and guidance, relevant codes of practice and what I consider to have been good industry practice at the time, I consider it fair and reasonable that in August 2024 Revolut should:

- have been monitoring accounts and any payments made or received to counter various risks, including preventing fraud and scams;
- have had systems in place to look out for unusual transactions or other signs that might indicate that its customers were at risk of fraud (among other things). This is particularly so given the increase in sophisticated fraud and scams in recent years, which firms are generally more familiar with than the average customer;
- have acted to avoid causing foreseeable harm to customers, for example by maintaining adequate systems to detect and prevent scams and by ensuring all aspects of its products, including the contractual terms, enabled it to do so;
- in some circumstances, irrespective of the payment channel used, have taken additional steps, or made additional checks, or provided additional warnings, before processing a payment;
- have been mindful of – among other things – common scam scenarios, how the fraudulent practices are evolving and the different risks these can present to consumers, when deciding whether to intervene.

Taking the above into consideration, in this case, I need to decide whether Revolut acted fairly and reasonably in its dealings with Mrs F when these transactions were made, or whether it should have done more than it did.

I've kept in mind that EMI's such as Revolut process high volumes of transactions each day. There is a balance for Revolut to find between allowing customers to be able to use their accounts and questioning transactions to confirm they're legitimate.

I've reviewed Mrs F's account statements, and I can't conclude that the payments made to the scam would have looked particularly unusual or suspicious to Revolut. The highest payment made as part of this scam was for £400, and although I appreciate that the payments may have represented a lot of money to Mrs F, they were simply not of a value where I'd usually expect Revolut to be concerned that Mrs F was at a heightened risk of financial harm.

I've also considered the frequency of the payments. The scam payments were made across several days and didn't escalate rapidly in value or frequency in a pattern that could typically indicate a scam was taking place. So, it would have been difficult for Revolut to identify that a scam was unfolding.

They were also made to a legitimate online business which Mrs F had used several times before the scam occurred, so these payments would not have appeared as unusual or outside her usual spending habits.

So, while Revolut should be looking out for signs that their customers are at risk of financial harm from fraud, I'm not persuaded the value, the destination of the payments or the frequency of the payments were so unusual or suspicious for Revolut to have suspected Mrs F was at risk of financial harm - thereby prompting it to intervene before processing them.

*Could Revolut have recovered Mrs F's funds?*

There are industry standards around attempting recovery of funds where a scam is reported. So, I've also thought about whether Revolut could have done more to recover the funds after Mrs F reported the fraud.

It's possible to dispute a debit card payment through a process called chargeback, which can sometimes be attempted if something has gone wrong with a debit card purchase, subject to the relevant card scheme's rules. Revolut didn't think a chargeback would have been successful in the circumstances, which I agree with. This is because Mrs F received the service she has paid for when purchasing her online gift cards.

I'm sorry to hear Mrs F suffered a financial loss as a result of what happened and from what she has told us this has been very difficult to deal with. But it would only be fair for me to direct Revolut to refund her loss if I thought it was responsible – and I'm not persuaded that this was the case. For the above reasons, I think Revolut has acted fairly and so I'm not going to tell it to do anything further.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs F to accept or reject my decision before 2 July 2025.

Aleya Khanom  
**Ombudsman**