

The complaint

Miss M is complaining about Revolut Ltd because it declined to refund money she lost as a result of fraud.

What happened

Sadly, Miss M fell victim to a cruel impersonation scam. On 14 December 2024, she received calls from scammers, claiming to be from the fraud departments at Revolut and her bank, who claimed her account had been compromised. She was then told to transfer money to Revolut and tricked into making card payments of £1,850 and £2,000 to a cryptocurrency account controlled by the scammers.

Our investigator didn't recommend the complaint be upheld. She felt Revolut carried out an appropriate intervention, noting that it declined the first attempted payment to the cryptocurrency exchange and showed a series of warnings relating to impersonation scams.

Miss M didn't accept the investigator's assessment and made the following key points:

- The warnings weren't sufficiently impactful. They were generic and not tailored to her situation.
- Revolut should have spoken to her, either by calling her or via its live chat function.
- In any event, she doesn't remember seeing the warnings.
- She was vulnerable due to her circumstances at the time.

The complaint has now been referred to me for review.

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.

Having done so, I've reached the same overall conclusions as the investigator, and for broadly the same reasons. I haven't necessarily commented on every single point raised but concentrated instead on the issues I believe are central to the outcome of the complaint. This is consistent with our established role as an informal alternative to the courts. In considering this complaint I've had regard to the relevant law and regulations; any regulator's rules, guidance and standards, codes of practice, and what I consider was good industry practice at the time.

While I accept Miss M was tricked into making these payments and didn't know what was actually happening to her money, I believe it's clear that she did take the steps necessary to authorise them. In broad terms, the starting position at law is that an Electronic Money Institution (EMI) such as Revolut is expected to process payments a customer authorises it to make, in accordance with the Payment Services Regulations and the terms and conditions

of their account. In this context, ‘*authorised*’ essentially means the customer gave the business an instruction to make a payment from their account.

There are, however, some situations where we believe a business, taking into account relevant rules, codes and best practice standards, shouldn’t have taken its customer’s authorisation instruction at ‘face value’ – or should have looked at the wider circumstances surrounding the transaction before making the payment.

Revolut also has a duty to exercise reasonable skill and care, pay due regard to the interests of its customers and to follow good industry practice to keep customers’ accounts safe. This includes identifying vulnerable consumers who may be particularly susceptible to scams and looking out for payments which might indicate the consumer is at risk of financial harm.

Taking these things into account, I need to decide whether Revolut acted fairly and reasonably in its dealings with Miss M.

The payments

One of the key features of a Revolut account is that it facilitates payments that sometimes involve large amounts and/or the purchase of cryptocurrency. I must take into account that many similar payment instructions it receives will be entirely legitimate and also consider its responsibility to make payments promptly.

At the same time, it was well known by this point that payments to cryptocurrency carry a higher risk of being associated with fraud. It was presumably with this in mind that Revolut declined the first attempt to make a payment of £2,850.

Revolut says Miss M was then taken through a series of questions about the payment, including whether anyone was pressuring her to make the payment – to which the answer received was ‘*no*’ – and its purpose. Revolut says it was told the payment was a transfer to another account and that this prompted a series of warning screens about impersonation scams. These included warnings that Revolut would never ask her to move money, she should be wary of unexpected calls, that only scammers would tell her to move money to a safe account and that she should never ignore these warnings.

Having thought carefully about the risks this payment presented, I think a proportionate response would have been for Revolut to ask about its purpose and to provide tailored warnings relevant to the type of scam that could be taking place. I’m satisfied that’s broadly what happened here. Contrary to Miss M’s suggestion, I’m satisfied the warnings were relevant to her situation. Further, I don’t think the circumstances were such that a human intervention via a phone call or the live chat function was required.

I note Miss M says she doesn’t remember seeing the warnings. But the account history does show a payment for £2,850 to the cryptocurrency exchange was declined and the subsequent intervention Revolut has described is consistent with my understanding of its normal procedure in this situation. I appreciate Miss M may not specifically remember this - and that’s not necessarily unexpected given everything that was going on and the sense of urgency and panic the scammers tried to create – but, on balance, I find that it’s more likely than not that this process was followed as described.

Once this intervention had been completed, I wouldn’t have expected Revolut to question the two payments that were made successfully shortly afterwards and I can’t reasonably say it was at fault for processing them in line with the instructions it received.

Finally, Miss M has outlined her circumstances at the time and I can see that things were difficult for her. But I've seen nothing to suggest Revolut was or should have been aware of this such that it could have been expected to take it into account in the decision on whether or not to process these payments.

I want to be clear that it's not my intention to suggest Miss M is to blame for what happened in any way. She fell victim to a sophisticated scam that was carefully designed to deceive and manipulate its victims. I can understand why she acted in the way she did. But my role is to consider the actions of Revolut and, having done so, I'm not persuaded these were the cause of her losses.

Recovery of funds

I've also looked at whether Revolut could or should have done more to try and recover Miss M's losses once it was aware that the payments were the result of fraud.

Because these were card payments, they're not covered by the recently introduced reimbursement rules that cover payment transfers. The mechanism for recovering card payments is the chargeback scheme. This is a voluntary agreement between card providers and card issuers who set the scheme rules and is not enforced by law. A chargeback isn't guaranteed to result in a refund, there needs to be a right to a chargeback under the scheme rules and under those rules the recipient of the payment can defend a chargeback if it doesn't agree with the request.

I'd only expect Revolut to have raised a chargeback claim if it was likely to be successful and it doesn't appear that would have been the case here. Miss M paid a legitimate cryptocurrency exchange and her disagreement is with the scammers, not the cryptocurrency exchange. Unfortunately, it wouldn't have been possible for Revolut to process a chargeback claim against the scammers as she didn't pay them directly.

In conclusion

I recognise Miss M has been the victim of a cruel scam and I'm sorry she lost this money. I realise the outcome of this complaint will come as a great disappointment but, for the reasons I've explained, I think Revolut acted fairly and reasonably in its dealings with her and I won't be telling it to make any refund.

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 Miss M to accept or reject my decision before 10 September 2025.

James Biles
Ombudsman