

The complaint

Mr W complains that Revolut Ltd won't refund money he lost when he fell victim to a job scam.

What happened

The detailed background to this complaint is well-known to the parties, so I won't repeat it here again. Instead, I'll provide an overview and focus on giving my reasons for my decision.

The complaint concerns 12 transactions totalling just under £8,000 which Mr W made over a period of a few days in October 2024. These were made in connection with a job opportunity – completing tasks to boost ratings – with a company he was introduced to by a 'recruiter' who reached out to him through a popular instant messaging service. It was explained to Mr W that his job would involve completing the assigned tasks to earn wages and commission.

Mr W was required to reset his work account every now and then before he could complete the tasks. To do this, he was required to make deposits, which he did using his Revolut card. At the time, Mr W thought he was depositing funds to his work account. But in reality, his payments went to an online money remitter. Mr W realised he'd been scammed when he was asked to deposit a large amount into his work account, and he was unable to make withdrawals.

Revolut didn't refund Mr W's losses, and he made a complaint which was subsequently referred to our service. Our investigator didn't think Revolut acted unfairly in processing the transactions, given it had intervened when it when they thought it should have but Mr W's responses to its enquiries didn't raise additional concerns.

Mr W disagreed and asked for his complaint to be reviewed by an ombudsman.

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 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 in October 2024 that 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; and
- 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 – (as in practice Revolut sometimes does including for card payments).

It isn't in dispute that Mr W has fallen victim to a cruel scam here, nor that he authorised the payments he made under the instructions of the scammer.

So, I've gone onto consider, taking into account what Revolut knew about the payments, at what point, if any, it ought to have identified that Mr W might be at a heightened risk of fraud that merited its intervention.

I appreciate Mr W feels strongly that the payments were unusual for his account activity. But having considered when they were made, their value and who they were made to, I'm not persuaded that Revolut ought to have found payments 1 to 9, which ranged between £50 and £600, suspicious to the point that it ought to have made enquiries before processing them. By the time payment 10, which was just shy of £1,800, was authorised, there was a three-fold jump in the value of the payment. I consider Revolut should have taken additional steps to ensure everything was above board. And I can see that it did.

After informing Mr W that the transaction had been flagged as a potential scam payment, Revolut asked him to review the risks involved. It asked him to answer a series of questions, including whether he was being guided on what to do. Revolut has provided Mr W's response to that question, as well as subsequent questions. I can see he told Revolut that no one was assisting or guiding him.

The next question Mr W was asked was why he was making the payment. He was required to select from one of the payment purposes listed on the screen and the information provided shows that "paying a family member or friend" was submitted on this occasion. Based on the option selected, Mr W was shown a scam warning over a series of screens which he couldn't skip. These included a warning that there was an increase in scams involving victims being contacted by someone claiming to be a friend or a family member, and covered scenarios such as scammers faking messages and calls from loved ones in distress, and convincing customers to urgently transfer funds. Mr W was told to double check the account details and to be wary of sending money to someone he'd only met online.

At the end of the warning, Mr W was presented with the option of unblocking the payment or continue blocking it. He indicated that he wanted to unblock the payment. Revolut provided a final warning in the form of an attestation which required Mr W to tick "I accept" to confirm that he understood and accepted the risks tied to the payment. And that he would only proceed if he was confident that it was legitimate. Following Mr W's confirmation, payments to the merchant were no longer blocked and further attempts were processed.

I've thought very carefully about what happened here. Revolut recognised that the transaction carried a heightened risk of financial harm from fraud and took additional steps.

In the circumstances of this case, and given the transaction amount involved, I consider that the steps it took – establishing the nature of the transaction to provide a better automated warning – was proportionate to the risk involved.

Unfortunately, Mr W didn't respond to Revolut's queries accurately. For instance, he reassured the EMI that he wasn't being guided. We know now that he was being coached by the scammer on how to answer the questions.

Given he was falling victim to a job scam, the warning Revolut provided is unlikely to have resonated with Mr W. However, Revolut couldn't reasonably have known that an inaccurate payment purpose selection had been made, given there were no other concerning factors about the payment. In the circumstances, I don't think Revolut acted unreasonably in lifting any restrictions on Mr W's card and allowing him to attempt a further payment.

The remaining transactions – to the same merchant – were slightly higher in value to the one Revolut had intervened on. Given the increased spending activity to the merchant in one day, arguably Revolut should have intervened again during one of the later transactions. I consider a proportionate response to the risk identified would have been for Revolut to have asked a series of automated questions designed to narrow down the type of risk associated with payments being made. Had it done so, on balance, I'm not convinced that the scam would have been uncovered. This is because I think Mr W would likely have responded to Revolut's questions in the same way as he had done previously, considering he was following the scammer's instructions. By his own admission, he wasn't paying attention to Revolut's warnings.

I've given due consideration to Revolut's duty to make payments promptly, as well as what I consider to have been good industry practice at the time. While I recognise that Mr W feels strongly that a direct intervention ought to have happened, in the individual circumstances of this case, I consider asking a series of questions to provide a better automated warning would have been adequate intervention.

I've also thought about whether Revolut could have done more to recover the funds once it became aware of the situation, as in some circumstances the money can be recovered. As these were card payments, the recovery avenue would have been limited to raising a chargeback.

Here, the payments were made to an online money remitter, and it's a common feature of the scam Mr W has described that the service requested (i.e., money remittance) is provided as per the scammer's instructions. I acknowledge that in this case, Mr W didn't benefit from this service. But that doesn't give grounds for a chargeback. I should also add that a chargeback can only be raised against the merchant, i.e., the money remitter, not another party (such as the ultimate beneficiary of the funds). So, on balance, I don't think it's likely that Mr W could have recovered the lost funds in this way.

In conclusion, I know that Mr W will be disappointed with this outcome. Not least because of how long this complaint has been ongoing. Despite my natural sympathy for the situation in which he finds himself due to the scammer's actions, for the reasons given, it wouldn't be fair of me to hold Revolut responsible for his loss.

My final decision

For the reasons given, 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 W to accept or reject my decision before 23 October 2025.

Gagandeep Singh
Ombudsman