

The complaint

Mrs W complains that Revolut Ltd didn't do enough when she fell victim to a cryptocurrency investment scam.

What happened

In June 2023, Mrs W got involved in a cryptocurrency trading scam. She invested her husband's funds, with his consent, via Binance. Mrs W sent three card payments between 19 and 26 June 2023 and made two transfers, one on 26 and one on 27 of June 2023. Mrs W realised she'd been scammed when she was asked for more money to release her profits, despite paying £17,500 in fees for this on 27 June 2023.

Mrs W complained to Revolut it should've done more to protect her from this scam. It didn't uphold her complaint and said she'd authorised all the payments. Mrs W came to our Service and our Investigator partially upheld her complaint. She agreed to this outcome, but Revolut asked for an Ombudsman to reconsider the case.

I issued a provisional decision on this case in mid-March 2025. My provisional findings and redress were as follows:

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 June 2023 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;*
- *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 (including for example the common use of multi-stage fraud by scammers, including the use of payments to cryptocurrency accounts as a step to defraud consumers) and the different risks these can present to consumers, when deciding whether to intervene.*

Our Investigator concluded that Revolut ought to have intervened with a tailored

cryptocurrency warning on the 2nd payment Mrs W made on 19 June 2023. I'm in agreement with this, as Mrs W had then sent £4,800 to cryptocurrency that day and this was out of character for her account and indicated a scam risk. But I'm not persuaded this would've unravelled the scam.

I can see from the scam chat Mrs W has shared that she discovers negative webpages about the scam firm and finds the FCA warning on 19 June 2023. It's clear she understands the warning and says about the scam firm not being authorised and the warning says not to use them. But despite this, she goes ahead. She arranges a call with the scammer and they persuade her to continue. I accept she sends this message shortly after making the payments, but I'm not persuaded she'd have acted differently if she'd seen this information prior to them.

I have also seen she shares her banking screenshots with the scammer and when Binance ask her questions and pauses her payment, she shares this with the scammer too. And they tell her how to answer the questions – but I note this isn't dishonestly. So I don't think a tailored warning would've changed things at this point, as she'd have defaulted to the scammer about any concerns and they'd have reassured her.

I don't think Revolut needed to do more than showing tailored warnings until Mrs W made the £17,500 payment. And for the reasons above, I'm not persuaded these would've stopped her going ahead. But on the last payment, as I consider it should have, Revolut did intervene and speak to Mrs W in in-app chat. However, the quality of this intervention was poor and I consider that if it had intervened proportionately, the scam would've unravelled.

The last payment Mrs W made was for fees to withdraw her funds, so a different purpose to the earlier payments to invest. We can see she shared with Revolut this was a P2P payment via Binance. But at that time it didn't ask her any further questions about what she was doing or provide her with any cryptocurrency related warnings. She doesn't defer to the scammer during this chat with Revolut, so I'm persuaded she'd have just honestly answered any questions.

The scam chat we hold doesn't suggest Mrs W was ever told to mislead Revolut. And by the time she is paying to withdraw her funds, she believes she has made a very unrealistic sum. Revolut ought to have known that paying large fees to withdraw unrealistic returns was one of the common hallmarks of a scam. And I can also see from the scam chat that Mrs W had some concerns already around the fees and that the scam firm wouldn't release her funds. So I'm satisfied a proportionate intervention by Revolut at this point would've unravelled the scam.

Our Investigator concluded that Mrs W should be held 50% liable for her losses and I'm satisfied that is still fair. As above, she found warnings on the scam firm, but checked with the firm itself about these. A scammer is very unlikely to be honest, so I can't say this was a reasonable response to finding concerning information. And she was given a very unrealistic rate of return, including through a referral scheme, but she still went ahead. So I think a 50% deduction for contributory negligence is fair.

I've considered whether Revolut did enough to try and recover any of the payments. But as they were used to purchase genuine cryptocurrency, I'm satisfied it wouldn't have been able to recover these funds.

Putting things right

Revolut Ltd should refund Mrs W 50% of the last payment she made for £17,500, so pay her £8,750. Revolut should pay 8% simple interest on this sum from the date of payment to the date of settlement. My understanding from Mrs W's testimony is that this money belonged to her husband, so I would expect this to be returned to him, unless another payment arrangement has already been reached.

Mrs W accepted the provisional decision. Revolut didn't respond by the deadline set. So, the case has now been returned to me.

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've reconsidered this case and the arguments presented by both sides. But as Revolut didn't submit any response to my provisional decision and Mrs W accepted it, I see no reason to change my findings.

As I set out in my provisional decision, included above, I consider a proportionate intervention by Revolut on the last payment Mrs W made would've unravelled this scam. But liability should be shared equally between the parties as there were red flags Mrs W was aware of, but she went ahead with investing anyway.

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My final decision

For the reasons set out above, I uphold Mrs W's complaint against Revolut Ltd and require it to pay the redress outlined above.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs W to accept or reject my decision before 28 April 2025.

Amy Osborne
Ombudsman