

## **The complaint**

Mr C complains that Revolut Ltd won't refund the money he lost when he was the victim of a scam.

## **What happened**

In January 2025, Mr C was looking to book flight tickets and was contacted by someone who said they worked for a travel agent. They discussed the flights Mr C wanted and sent him an invoice. And, after looking up the travel agent online, Mr C agreed to buy the tickets from them and made a payment of £851 from his Revolut account to pay for them.

Unfortunately, after making the payment, Mr C says the travel agent told him the payment had been declined and so he needed to pay again. Mr C then became suspicious and reported the payment he had made to Revolut as a scam.

Revolut investigated but said Mr C had manually approved the payment, so it couldn't be reversed or disputed. Mr C wasn't satisfied with Revolut's response, so referred a complaint to our service.

One of our investigators looked at the complaint. They didn't think we'd have expected Revolut to intervene when Mr C made the payment, or that anything we'd have expected it to have done would have recovered the money he lost. So they didn't think Revolut should have to refund the payment Mr C made. Mr C disagreed with our investigator, so the complaint has been passed 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.

*Did Revolut do enough to protect Mr C when he was making this payment?*

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.

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 January 2025 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 – (as in practice Revolut sometimes does including in relation to card payments);
- 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.

So I've considered whether Revolut should have identified that Mr C was at heightened risk of financial harm from fraud as a result of the payment he made here.

But while I appreciate this payment was a significant amount of money for Mr C, it wasn't for a particularly large amount in terms of the payments Revolut will be processing across all its customers each day. So it wasn't for an amount I would have expected Revolut to identify as suspicious based on its size alone.

Mr C's Revolut account had also only recently been opened, so Revolut didn't have any previous account activity to compare the payment to when assessing whether it was unusual or out of character. And there wasn't anything else about the payment that I would have expected to cause Revolut significant concern.

So I don't think it's unreasonable that Revolut didn't identify that Mr C could be at heightened risk of financial harm from fraud as a result of this payment. And so I don't think it's unreasonable that it didn't take any further steps or carry out any additional checks before allowing it to go through.

*Should Revolut have stopped the payment after Mr C reported it?*

Mr C has said he contacted Revolut shortly after the payment was made, and the payment didn't leave his account until the following day. So he feels Revolut should have stopped the payment leaving his account.

But this kind of card payment cannot be stopped once it has been authorised. It may show as pending and not show as being removed from a customer's account until the merchant processes it, but it cannot be stopped or reversed once it has been authorised. And Mr C authorised this payment when he first made it.

So, even though it may not have been showing as removed from his account until the following day, Revolut could not stop the payment leaving Mr C's account when he contacted it to report the scam. And so I don't think Revolut has acted incorrectly or made an error in not stopping the payment leaving his account.

*Did Revolut do enough to try to recover the payment once it had left Mr C's account?*

Once they have been notified of a scam, we expect EMIs such as Revolut to take reasonable steps to try to recover any money their customers have lost – including making use of any available chargeback scheme. So I've also considered whether Revolut did enough to try to recover the money Mr C lost.

A chargeback is a process by which card payments can be disputed with the merchant who took the payment – which in Mr C's case is the money transfer service he made the card payment to. And we only expect a bank to carry out a chargeback where there is a reasonable chance of it being successful.

But the money transfer service Mr C made the payment to is a legitimate money transfer company. And I've not seen anything to suggest it did anything wrong or was involved in the scam in any way. It appears to have just transferred the money Mr C sent on to the travel agent, as it was supposed to do. So the money transfer service has carried out the service it was supposed to do and I don't think any chargeback against it would likely be successful. And so I don't think Revolut has acted unreasonably in not carrying out a chargeback here.

I sympathise with the position Mr C has found himself in and I recognise that he has lost a significant amount of money. He has been the victim of a cruel scam and I appreciate that my decision will come as a disappointment to him. I'm also in no way saying he did anything wrong or that he doesn't have a legitimate grievance against the travel agent. But I can only look at Revolut's responsibilities here and, for the reasons I've explained above, I wouldn't have expected it to do anything further here and I don't think it would be fair to hold it responsible for the money Mr C has lost.

### **My final decision**

For the reasons set out above, I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr C to accept or reject my decision before 5 December 2025.

Alan Millward  
**Ombudsman**