DRN-5491249

Financial Ombudsman Service

The complaint

Mrs M complains that Revolut Ltd won't refund her the money she lost in a fake rental scam.

What happened

The circumstances surrounding this complaint are well-known to both parties, so I have simply summarised what I consider to be the key events.

On 11 November 2024, Mrs M saw an advert for a property to rent and made enquiries with the landlord. Mrs M and the landlord communicated by telephone and through a popular messaging platform. The landlord provided a rental agreement, a copy of his identification details and pictures of the apartment. Mrs M thought this was a genuine rental opportunity, so she decided to go ahead.

Mrs M made one payment for CHF 3,003.60 on 12 November 2024 to secure the property. Mrs M says that on 14 November 2024 she discovered that she had been the victim of a sophisticated scam and she reported the scam to Revolut, and to the police, that same day.

Revolut contacted the beneficiary bank on 14 November 2024, but it says that it received confirmation from the beneficiary bank, on 29 November 2024, that it was not able to return the payment.

Mrs M says the scam was sophisticated and she was vulnerable. She considers Revolut should have taken additional measures to protect her and to prevent the scam. She said the scam caused her a great deal of financial hardship and distress, and that Revolut delayed giving her the outcome of her claim for a refund.

Revolut says it wasn't at fault. It says the payment Mrs M made on 12 November 2024 was not unusual or out of character for the sorts of transactions it sees on its accounts and Mrs M had given "Transfers" as one of the reasons for opening the account in 2019. Revolut says it was not made aware Mrs M had any vulnerabilities. It also says it provided Mrs M with the following warning when she added the payee as a new beneficiary:

"Do you know and trust this payee?

If you're unsure, don't pay them, as we may not be able to help you get your money back. Remember, fraudsters can impersonate others, and we will never ask you to make a payment."

Our Investigator didn't uphold Mrs M's complaint. She didn't think the payment was sufficiently unusual or suspicious that Revolut ought to have intervened. She noted that Mrs M had made a number of previous payments in CHF and a number of payments of a similar value. She also didn't consider one-off higher value payments were particularly unusual. As she didn't think Revolut had had reason to intervene, she didn't think it had made an error in allowing the payment to proceed. She thought Revolut had acted promptly in attempting to recover Mrs M's money

Mrs M didn't agree. She said this was a large international payment to a new beneficiary, made after she had contact with the beneficiary only by email, telephone, messaging and social media. She didn't receive any tailored warning messages from Revolut that might have been relevant to the particular transaction, but human intervention could have led her to reconsider the payment.

As Mrs M didn't agree with the investigator's assessment, the complaint has been passed to me for an ombudsman's 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.

Having taken into account longstanding regulatory expectations and requirements, and what I consider to be good industry practice, I think Revolut ought to have been on the look-out for the possibility of fraud and made additional checks before processing payments in some circumstances.

I have reviewed Mrs M's account of what happened and the payment she made to the scammer. Having considered when the payment was made, its value and who it was made to, I'm not persuaded Revolut ought to have found the payment suspicious, such that it ought to have made enquires of Mrs M before processing the payment, as I'll explain.

I accept the payment was larger than the usual payments Mrs M made and it was an international payment, but larger, one-off payments are not particularly unusual for this type of account with an Electronic Money Institution. I also note that Mrs M had made a number of previous payments, in the same currency, within the months leading up to this transaction, so the fact that it was an international payment in foreign currency does not appear particularly suspicious. While the payment was to a new payee, the payment was not so large that I would consider Revolut ought to have intervened and there is no evidence it was made aware of any particular vulnerability, such that I consider it ought to have taken additional steps.

Overall, I'm not persuaded the transaction was sufficiently unusual or suspicious that Revolut ought to have intervened. I'm also satisfied Revolut took reasonable steps to try to recover Mrs M's money, by promptly sending a claim to the beneficiary bank. While recovery wasn't possible, I can't see that this was due to an error of Revolut's.

I understand that Mrs M considers that Revolut delayed giving her an outcome when she claimed for a refund of the transaction. But Revolut didn't receive an outcome from the beneficiary bank about the recovery of funds until 29 November 2024 and it appears to have let Mrs M know it wasn't going to refund the transaction, by email, on 5 December 2024. I don't consider Revolut took an unreasonable amount of time to respond to Mrs M.

Whilst Mrs M has undoubtedly been the victim of a cruel and sophisticated scam, I don't find there were any failings on Revolut's part that would lead me to uphold this complaint.

My final decision

I don't uphold Mrs M's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I’m required to ask Mrs M to accept or reject my decision before 15 September 2025.

Greg Barham
Ombudsman