

The complaint

Miss B is complaining that Revolut Ltd didn't do enough to prevent her from making payments to a scam.

The complaint is brought on her behalf by a professional representative but for ease I'll mostly refer to Miss B.

What happened

The circumstances of the scam are known to both parties so I'll only set out the key points here.

In late 2023 Miss B saw an advert for an investment opportunity on social media, endorsed by a celebrity. Using the details provided she made contact with someone who I'll call "the scammer" who claimed to represent an investment company. Miss B subsequently communicated with him mainly by Zoom calls.

Under the guidance of the scammer Miss B opened an account with Revolut in November 2023. She deposited £500 into her account and on 18 December 2023 she converted this to cryptocurrency and sent it on to the scam.

In January 2024 she made two further payments, by international transfer, to a company based abroad. She sent 17,100 Euros on 5 January 2024 and 17,240.72 Euros on 10 January 2024.

On 12 January 2024 Revolut restricted Miss B's account and when she asked why it said it thought she'd made the payments to a scam. On 15 January 2024 it told her it was closing her account. Miss B went on to make further payments to the scam from her account with another business.

Miss B realised she'd been scammed when she saw some poor online reviews of the investment company she thought she'd been dealing with, and after detailing her own experiences she was contacted by someone else who'd been scammed by the same company.

Miss B complained to Revolut, and subsequently to the Financial Ombudsman Service, about what had happened. Our Investigator didn't think Miss B's complaint should be upheld. But Miss B didn't agree, so her complaint has been passed to me for review and a 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 done so, I'm not upholding Miss B's complaint – for much the same reasons as the Investigator.

It's not in dispute that Miss B authorised the payments, and Revolut do have a duty to act on her instructions. But in some circumstances, Revolut should take a closer look at the circumstances of a payment – for example, if it ought to be alert to a fraud risk, because the transaction is unusual or looks out of character or suspicious. And if so, it should intervene, for example, by contacting the customer directly, before releasing the payment. I'd expect any intervention to be proportionate to the circumstances of the payment.

But I've also kept in mind that Revolut processes high volumes of transactions each day. There is a balance for it to find between allowing customers to be able to use their account and questioning transactions to confirm they're legitimate.

Miss B's account with Revolut was opened shortly before she made the first payment to the scam, so it didn't have much prior account usage to establish whether the scam payments were out of character for her.

Revolut didn't intervene when Miss B converted the first payment to cryptocurrency in order to send it to the scam. But this payment wasn't high in value, and I don't think it was unreasonable for Revolut not to have been concerned about the risk of financial harm to Miss B from this transaction.

Revolut did intervene in the second payment, which was of considerably higher value. I agree that Revolut ought to have found this payment concerning. Initially, Revolut paused the payment and asked Miss B what it was for. Miss B said the payment was to buy or rent goods or services. Revolut asked Miss B some further questions related to this payment purpose and she said, in summary:

- She wasn't being assisted in the questionnaire.
- She was paying for marketing services.
- She'd met the person she was paying and/or knew them personally.
- She'd seen the item she was buying in person.

Revolut then showed Miss B a warning related to purchase scams. But it still wasn't satisfied with Miss B's responses and contacted her directly through its in-app chat. It asked her what the payment was for, and she said it was for marketing services. It then asked if she was being guided to make the payment and she said she wasn't being guided. Revolut then unlocked the payment, and it was allowed to go through.

I don't think Revolut was unreasonable to allow Miss B's payment to be processed after having this conversation with her – I think its intervention was broadly proportionate to the risk it had identified through Miss B's answers to its questions. But even if it had questioned Miss B further, I don't think this would have uncovered the scam. This is because Miss B wasn't open with Revolut about the circumstances of the payment and I've seen no indication that this would have changed if Revolut had asked more questions about it. Miss B's told us that when Revolut intervened she was on a call with the scammer, who was telling her how to answer Revolut's questions. And I can see that the scammer had apparently given Miss B a detailed cover story which she continued to use when making payments to the scam from another business.

I would add that even if further questioning from Revolut *had* uncovered the true circumstances of this payment, I'm not persuaded that, ultimately, this would have prevented Miss B from making further payments to the scam. I say this because Miss B continued to make payments even after Revolut told her it thought she was being scammed and closed her account.

Revolut allowed the third payment to be made without further intervention but given that it was to the same business as the payment it had already questioned her about, I don't think this was particularly unreasonable. And in any case, I don't think another intervention on this payment would have led to a different outcome, for the reasons I've explained.

Overall, the weight of the evidence suggests Miss B was, unfortunately, fully under the spell of the scammer, was being guided by him on what to say to Revolut, and was determined to make the payments to the scam. I appreciate that the scammer manipulated her into making these payments and into not being open and honest with Revolut about the circumstances of them. But I've not found that Revolut could reasonably have done anything else which would have prevented Miss B from making the payments. It follows that it wouldn't be fair or reasonable to ask it to refund the payments she made.

There are industry standards around attempting recovery of funds where a scam is reported. Generally, businesses should attempt to recover payments immediately on being told of a scam.

The first payment was converted to cryptocurrency and then paid to the scam – there's no clear mechanism for Revolut to have recovered these funds.

Miss B has told us that the second and third payments were used to buy cryptocurrency to invest in the scam, in which case Revolut wouldn't have been able to recover them. It's not clear to me what these funds were used for after they left Miss B's Revolut account, but in any event, by the time the scam was reported to Revolut I think it was too late for recovery to have been possible. From our experience of similar scams, it's likely the funds were removed from the receiving account very shortly after the payments were made, to avoid them being successfully recalled.

I do appreciate that Miss B has told us she was vulnerable at the time of the payments – she had been diagnosed with depression and anxiety and was isolated due to living and working at home. But I can't see that Revolut was aware of this at the time of the payments, or that this means it ought to have done anything differently when Miss B instructed the payments.

I know this outcome will be disappointing for Miss B and I'm sorry for that. But for the reasons I've explained, I don't think Revolut should have done more to prevent her loss. So, it wouldn't be reasonable for me to ask it to refund the payments she made.

My final decision

My final decision is that I'm not upholding Miss B's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss B to accept or reject my decision before 10 October 2025.

Helen Sutcliffe
Ombudsman