

The complaint

Mr A complains that J.P. Morgan Europe Limited (trading as Chase) won't refund payments he made as part of a scam.

What happened

- Mr A was the victim of an investment scam involving eighteen payments from his Chase account between 30 August 2024 to 26 October 2024. These went to eleven payees for amounts between £200.00 and £500.00 – totalling £7,800.00.
- These payments were to purchase cryptocurrency via peer-to-peer services. The funds were then sent to fraudster's wallets under the guise that they'd be invested on their platform or used to pay fees so Mr A could withdraw his profits. In fact, the investment and associated fees were fake.
- When Mr A disputed the transactions with Chase and raised a complaint, it refunded three payments made after the introduction of the APP scam reimbursement rules – totalling £900.00. But it declined to refund the remaining payments, as it said he didn't do enough to protect himself from the scam and that it was reasonable that Chase didn't alert the payments.
- Still unhappy, Mr A brought his concerns to our service to investigate via his professional representatives. Our investigator didn't consider that Chase acted unfairly, because they weren't satisfied that the nature of the transactions meant it should've done more to intervene with the payments.
- Mr A's representatives disagreed, so the complaint has been passed to me to make a final 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 agree with the investigator's conclusions for the following reasons:

- It's not disputed that Mr A was the victim of a cruel scam. My role is to consider whether it's fair to hold Chase, as his bank, responsible for his losses from the scam. There are various rules and codes that mean victims of scams ought to be refunded in some circumstances. But to be clear, there isn't an overarching, general expectation that banks ought to refund victims of scams.

- For the remaining payments in dispute here, the starting position is that he's liable for his losses, given that it's accepted he authorised them. However, I have also considered whether Chase ought to have identified that the payments were suspicious and stepped in before they were made.
- The values ranged between £200.00 and £500.00 and the most that was sent to a single payee was £2,300.00. While this must have been a lot for him to lose, I'm mindful of the volume of payments of this size that a bank like Chase processes and the impracticalities of stopping every payment like them.
- I've noted that the payments happened over nearly two months and went to eleven different payees – so I don't think the frequency would've appeared alarming.
- I've also considered how Mr A told Chase the payments were to someone he knew. And because the payees related to peer-to-peer cryptocurrency purchases, it wouldn't have been clear they were related to cryptocurrency (which tends to carry an elevated risk of fraud).
- Chase, like all banks, have to balance protecting Mr A from fraud with its legal duty to make the payments he tells it to. And while we now know how these payments related to each other, it's important to highlight that Chase weren't privy to this information at this time. It follows, taking into account the factors I've described, that I don't think it was unreasonable that Chase processed these payments in line with Mr A's instructions without completing further checks.
- As well as whether Chase ought to have prevented his losses, I've considered whether it could have done more to recover them. But it appears that the payments didn't go directly to fraudsters – instead they were to purchase genuine cryptocurrency that was then passed on. So I don't think Chase could've recovered these as fraudulent.
- I appreciate this will be disappointing news for Mr A, particularly as he's ultimately a victim in this situation. But for the reasons I've explained, I'm not satisfied I can reasonably hold Chase responsible for his losses.

My final decision

For the reasons I've explained, I don't uphold Mr A's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr A to accept or reject my decision before 11 February 2026.

Emma Szkolar
Ombudsman