

The complaint

Ms J is complaining that Revolut Ltd won't refund a payment she was tricked into making after falling victim to a scam.

What happened

Ms J was selling an item on an online marketplace. She was contacted by what she thought was the marketplace, letting her know that she'd sold the item, but needed to verify her details. Ms J followed the link and instructions she'd been given, entering her card details and then following the stronger authentication process on Revolut's app - but this led to a payment of £495 being taken from her account. The payment was made to a money transfer company.

Ms J quickly realised that she'd been scammed, and she contacted Revolut to report what had happened and to ask it to stop the payment. But Revolut told her it considered that she'd authorised the payment and it couldn't be stopped.

Ms J raised a complaint with Revolut, and it issued its final response, explaining that it wouldn't be refunding the payment and that there were no valid grounds for a chargeback claim to be raised. Ms J brought her complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service.

Our Investigator looked into what happened, but they didn't think Revolut ought to refund the payment Ms J had made. They said that they thought Ms J had authorised the payment, because it would have been clear that she was making a payment when she was asked to authenticate it. They didn't think the payment would have looked unusual or suspicious to Revolut, such that it should have contacted Ms J before processing it. And they didn't think Revolut was unreasonable not to raise a chargeback claim as it was unlikely to have succeeded.

Ms J didn't agree with the Investigator's findings, so her complaint was passed to me for review and 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.

I'm sorry to disappoint Ms J but I'm not upholding her complaint, for much the same reasons as the Investigator.

Did Ms J authorise the payment?

The relevant law here is the Payment Services Regulations 2017 – these set out what is needed for a payment to be authorised and who has liability for disputed payments in different situations. With some exceptions, the starting point is that the consumer is responsible for authorised payments and the business is responsible for unauthorised payments. Ms J disputes authorising the payment, so I'll address this point first.

The PSRs specify that authorisation depends on whether the payment transactions were authenticated correctly – and whether Ms J, or someone acting on her behalf, consented to them.

The PSRs go on to specify how consent is given. It must be in the form, and in accordance with the procedure, agreed between Ms J and Revolut. I've reviewed the terms of Ms J's account with Revolut but it doesn't specify exactly how Ms J gives consent to online card payments. But broadly speaking, this is usually through entering the long card number, the card expiry date and CVV into the merchant's website.

Ms J was tricked into sharing her card details and then the scammer entered her card details into the merchant's website to make the payment – so here it seems it was the scammer who gave the payment instruction using Ms J's card details. Ms J didn't agree to this payment instruction, but Revolut says the payment was authorised as Ms J confirmed the payment in its app.

Ms J said she wasn't aware she was making a payment, and I can see that the message she received told her that the money would be briefly frozen to check the card's validity. Revolut has sent us some screenshots to show that the process flow here has steps which involve being shown a notification which says a payment is waiting to be reviewed, which then opens a screen in the app asking for the payment to be reviewed. The payment amount and who it's being made to is shown on the screen with an option to confirm or reject the payment. So, I think it would have been clear that Ms J was approving a payment when she pressed confirm.

Although Ms J didn't enter her card details to make the payment, I'm satisfied that the payment was correctly authenticated using Ms J's card information and the stronger authentication process. I think that by completing these steps, Ms J represented to Revolut that the payment instruction was genuine. And it was reasonable for Revolut to rely on this to process the payment. So, it's reasonable for Revolut to treat the payment as having been authorised and as such it isn't obliged to provide a refund.

Should Revolut have recognised the scam and intervened?

I've concluded that the payment was authorised, so I've gone on to consider if Revolut should have done anything else to prevent the payment Ms J made to the scam.

Ms J has mentioned that she was a victim of an authorised push payment (APP) fraud and refers to the APP scam reimbursement rules, but this payment was made by debit card and isn't a "push" payment, so wouldn't be covered under the rules.

When a payment is authorised, Revolut has a duty to act on the payment instruction. But in some circumstances, it should take a closer look at the circumstances of the 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 payments. 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.

I agree with the Investigator that I wouldn't have expected Revolut to have intervened here. The value of the payment was not significant in the context of the payments Revolut processes every day and Ms J had made payments of a similar value before. I don't think

this payment ought to have caused Revolut to be sufficiently concerned about a scam risk that it ought to have intervened with a warning, or by contacting Ms J directly. So, I don't think Revolut ought reasonably to have done anything here to prevent Ms J from making the payment.

Could Revolut have done more to recover the payment?

The payment was made by debit card, and as such once it had been authorised it wasn't possible for Revolut to cancel it, even in a pending state.

It's possible to dispute a debit card payment through a process called chargeback, which can sometimes be attempted if something has gone wrong with a debit card purchase, subject to the relevant card scheme's rules. Revolut didn't raise a chargeback when Ms J disputed the payment, but I'm satisfied that there would have been little prospect of a chargeback being successful here. I say this because I've concluded the payment was authorised by Ms J, and also because the payment was made to a legitimate money transfer service which would have provided the service paid for.

I'm sorry to disappoint Ms J as I can see that she feels strongly about what's happened here. As the victim of a cruel scam, I can understand why she'd think she should get her money back. But I've not found that there are any grounds for me to direct Revolut to refund the disputed payment to her.

My final decision

My final decision is that I'm not upholding Ms J's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Ms J to accept or reject my decision before 12 August 2025.

Helen Sutcliffe
Ombudsman