

The complaint

Miss Z is complaining about Revolut Ltd because it declined to refund money she lost as a result of fraud.

What happened

Sadly, Miss Z fell victim to a cruel impersonation scam. On 20 April 2024, she received a call with a message from someone claiming to be from her university saying someone had opened a bank account in her name and that they would transfer her to the fraud department at Revolut (where she held an account) to sort things out. She then spoke to scammers pretending to be from Revolut who told her to move money into a new safe account.

On the scammer's instructions, transferred £7,400 to an account controlled by the scammers. After the call ended, she quickly realised this was a scam and reported it to Revolut later the same day. Unfortunately it wasn't able to recover her money.

Our investigator didn't recommend the complaint be upheld. They felt Revolut took appropriate steps to question the payment before it was processed based on the information it was given, which Miss Z later admitted wasn't correct.

Miss Z didn't accept the investigator's assessment and made the following key points:

- She should be entitled to reimbursement under the Contingent Reimbursement Model (CRM) Code.
- There was a sophisticated scam and she was manipulated into giving Revolut false information when asked about the payment.
- The scammers have a lot of personal information about her, indicating there had been a data leak.
- She reported the scam promptly but Revolut didn't do enough to recover her money.

The complaint has now been referred to me for review.

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've reached the same overall conclusions as the investigator, and for broadly the same reasons. I haven't necessarily commented on every single point raised but concentrated instead on the issues I believe are central to the outcome of the complaint. This is consistent with our established role as an informal alternative to the courts. In considering this complaint I've had regard to the relevant law and regulations; any regulator's rules, guidance and standards, codes of practice, and what I consider was good industry practice at the time.

There's no dispute that Miss Z authorised 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 a customer authorises it to make, in accordance with the Payment Services Regulations and the terms and conditions of their account. In this context, '*authorised*' essentially means the customer gave the business an instruction to make a payment from their account. In other words, they knew that money was leaving their account, irrespective of where that money actually went.

I note Miss Z believes Revolut's response fell below the standards set out in the CRM Code, but that's not relevant here as the Code was voluntary and Revolut didn't sign up to it. This notwithstanding, there are some situations where we believe a business, taking into account relevant rules, codes and best practice standards, shouldn't have taken its customer's authorisation instruction at 'face value' – or should have looked at the wider circumstances surrounding the transaction before making the payment.

Revolut also has a duty to exercise reasonable skill and care, pay due regard to the interests of its customers and to follow good industry practice to keep customers' accounts safe. This includes identifying vulnerable consumers who may be particularly susceptible to scams and looking out for payments which might indicate the consumer is at risk of financial harm.

Taking these things into account, I need to decide whether Revolut acted fairly and reasonably in its dealings with Miss Z.

The payment

When it received Miss Z's payment instruction, Revolut did identify she was at risk of harm from fraud and intervened in the payment process. She was asked a number of questions about the payment, including during a live chat with one of its agents, but unfortunately she didn't answer those questions correctly. Despite warnings that she should answer truthfully and that only scammers would tell her to ignore its warnings or hide the real reason for the payment, Miss Z said she was buying a car from a friend. She also said she had obtained their bank details face to face and that she wasn't being told how to answer Revolut's questions. Based on the information it received, Revolut showed a series of warnings relating to purchase scams.

Having thought carefully about the risks this payment presented, I'm satisfied Revolut's response was proportionate. It asked appropriate questions to identify the type of scam that could be taking place and provided tailored warnings that were relevant to the answers it received.

The success of any scam intervention is dependent to some extent on the customer providing accurate information. I understand Miss Z was on the telephone with the scammers throughout and they manipulated her to provide incorrect answers. But Revolut did warn that scammers sometimes do that and that she may not be able to get her money back if her answers weren't truthful. After warning Miss Z in this way, and in the absence of anything else that might have indicated her answers weren't accurate, I think Revolut was entitled to believe the information it had was correct.

Taking everything into account, I'm satisfied the action Revolut took at the time was proportionate to the risk associated with the payment and, based on the information it received, I wouldn't have expected it to have intervened further. So, I can't reasonably say it was at fault for processing the payment in line with Miss Z's instructions.

I want to be clear that it's not my intention to suggest Miss Z is to blame for what happened in any way. She fell victim to a sophisticated scam that was carefully designed to deceive and manipulate its victims. I can understand why she acted in the way she did. But my role is to consider the actions of Revolut and, having done so, I'm not persuaded these were the cause of her losses.

Finally, I note Miss Z's view that there must have been a data leak and that may well be how the scammers obtained personal information about her. But most people's details are held by many companies and such a leak could have come from any of them. The fact the scammers knew where she banked doesn't necessarily mean Revolut didn't take appropriate steps to protect her information and no evidence has been provided to show that it didn't.

Recovery of funds

I've also looked at whether Revolut could or should have done more to try and recover Miss Z's money.

Miss Z told Revolut about the scam later on the same day and it contacted the receiving bank shortly after this to attempt recovery. Unfortunately, it's a common feature of this type of scam that the fraudster will move money very quickly to other accounts once received to frustrate any attempted recovery and it's not a surprise that Revolut's attempts weren't successful. In the circumstances, I don't think anything that Revolut could have done differently would likely have led to Miss Z getting her money back.

In conclusion

I recognise Miss Z has been the victim of a cruel scam and I'm sorry she lost this money. I realise the outcome of this complaint will come as a great disappointment but, for the reasons I've explained, I think Revolut acted fairly and reasonably in its dealings with her and I won't be telling it to make any refund.

My final decision

My final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss Z to accept or reject my decision before 7 October 2025.

James Biles
Ombudsman