

The complaint

Mrs W complains that Revolut Ltd won't reimburse her money she lost to a scam.

Mrs W has brought her complaint with the assistance of a professional adviser, but for ease I'll refer to their submissions as being from Mrs W.

What happened

In November 2024 Mrs W paid more than £23,000 to what she believed was an investment opportunity. She had responded to an advert on social media and was contacted by someone she later realised was a scammer. The scammer said he'd trade on Mrs W's behalf and encouraged her to invest in return for significant profits. He gave her access to a trading account which appeared to show her trades and investment growth.

The scammer made continued demands for money including for taxes to avoid Mrs W's account being frozen. At that point, her partner persuaded her that she'd fallen victim to a scam.

On 27 November 2024 Mrs W reported the scam to Revolut. It said she'd authorised the card payments and continued with them despite its strong warnings explaining her transactions were high risk, so it didn't accept it was liable for her loss. Revolut said it hadn't been able to recover any money from the beneficiaries of the payments.

Unhappy with its response, Mrs W brought her complaint to us. Our Investigator didn't uphold the complaint. He thought the pattern and frequency of payments indicated Mrs W might be at heightened risk of fraud. But he thought Revolut's response had been proportionate to the risk identified. Mrs W had given incorrect reasons for making the payments so Revolut's warnings didn't resonate with her and this made it difficult for Revolut to uncover the scam. He said Revolut had attempted to recover the money but had not received a response from the beneficiary bank.

Mrs W disagreed with the Investigator's conclusions. She said the repeated transactions in another currency weren't indicative of her usual spending patterns and required additional scrutiny. The questions Revolut asked weren't tailored and, had Revolut robustly intervened by telephone, it would have realised she spoke English as a second language. Revolut should have known this vulnerability as she opened her account with her identification from another country.

Our Investigator considered Mrs W's additional points and sought comments from Revolut. Ultimately, our Investigator didn't change his conclusion. He said that even if Revolut had made further human interventions, he wasn't persuaded that this would have made any difference. Mrs W was under the influence of the scammer who was guiding her about the responses to give to Revolut. Our Investigator didn't consider that Revolut was on notice of any vulnerability at the time of the scam.

Mrs W requested an Ombudsman's decision, saying Revolut should be held at least partially responsible. As an agreement couldn't be reached the complaint's come to me for a 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.

It isn't in dispute that Mrs W authorised the transactions in question. She is therefore presumed liable for the loss in the first instance. However, Revolut is aware, taking into account longstanding regulatory expectations and requirements, and what I consider to be good industry practice at the time, that it should have been on the look-out for the possibility of fraud and made additional checks before processing payments in some circumstances.

Revolut recognised that Mrs W's payments indicated she was at a heightened risk of fraud. So it intervened in all the disputed payments, warning her it had identified the payments were a potential scam. Revolut asked Mrs W questions to determine the reason for her payments, explaining the importance of answering honestly and saying if she was pressurised to hide details this would be a scam.

One of the possible payment reasons Mrs W could have given Revolut was that the payment was for an investment, but Mrs W gave different reasons for her payments. For the majority of the payments she said she was paying a family member or friend. In response to further questions she said she was paying money she owed having been given the payment details face to face. Based on this information Revolut gave Mrs W targeted scam prevention warnings including that she should be wary of romance scams. Revolut also paused payments for three hours to give her time to consider the educational information it had given her about scams. She continued with the payments.

For some of the payments, Mrs W said she was transferring money to another account of hers and answered further questions about this. Revolut gave her scam warnings based on her answers including about 'safe account' scams. Mrs W continued with the payments.

I don't think Mrs W gave Revolut the correct reason she was making the transfers, so the warnings it showed her did not resonate with her. I think Revolut couldn't reasonably have identified that she was making an investment in cryptocurrency, based on the payment information and her responses. So it couldn't reasonably have given her a warning tailored to investment scams. Revolut had explained the importance of answering its questions honestly and warned her that if someone was telling her to mislead Revolut this would be a scam. From what she's told us, she was being guided to give Revolut incorrect information.

Even if Revolut had made further, human interventions in this case, I'm not persuaded this would have uncovered the scam. I say this because Mrs W was subject to social engineering by the scammers, who pressured her and guided her through the payments while she was on the phone with them. She said the scammers had instructed her on what information to provide to Revolut.

I think it's more likely than not, on the balance of probabilities, that Mrs W would have been similarly guided through any additional questions asked by Revolut and have given answers she knew were not true. So I don't think it's likely more open and probing questions would have made a difference, because she was under the spell of the scammer. I think it's likely, on balance, that the scammer would have given Mrs W the answers to any further probing questions by Revolut – as they had done when guiding Mrs W on the answers to give to the earlier questions it had asked.

Having considered everything, and whilst I recognise that Mrs W has lost money to a cruel and sophisticated scam, I don't think Revolut ought reasonably to have prevented it. I note her comments about English not being her first language, but I can't see that she made

Revolut aware of any additional communication needs and she had communicated with it in English during and after the scam. I don't consider Revolut missed signs of any vulnerability in the circumstances. So I'm not directing Revolut to reimburse Mrs W with any part of the stolen funds.

Finally, I don't consider Revolut could reasonably have done more to attempt to recover Mrs W's money, having contacted the beneficiary bank promptly but without a response.

My final decision

For the reasons I've explained, my final decision is that I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs W to accept or reject my decision before 2 October 2025.

Amanda Maycock
Ombudsman