

The complaint

Mr F complains that Revolut Ltd won't refund the money he said he lost to a scam.

What happened

The background to this complaint is well known to both parties so I will not repeat it in detail again here. In summary, from November 2019 to May 2020, Mr F made several payments totalling €57,715.15 towards what he thought was a genuine investment opportunity. He said he saw an advertisement on a social media platform and made the decision to invest. He realised it was a scam when he could not withdraw from the investment. Mr F subsequently raised the matter with Revolut but it didn't uphold his complaint.

Our Investigator didn't think the complaint should be upheld. She said at the time there was nothing to suggest the investment firm was not legitimate. And while our Investigator thought Revolut ought to have intervened in the payments, she didn't think it could have prevented the loss.

Mr F doesn't agree, as such, the complaint has been passed to me for 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.

Firstly, I want to clarify that I've taken into account Mr F's detailed submissions in relation to this complaint. However, if there's something I've not mentioned, it isn't because I've ignored it. I haven't. Rather, I've focused on setting out what is key to the decision I've reached.

I understand that Mr F has been the victim of a very cruel and sophisticated scam and I'm sorry he has lost a considerable sum of money. However, I must put aside my feelings and consider his complaint impartially. Having done so, I agree with the outcome the Investigator reached and for similar reasons. I know this will be disappointing to Mr F but I'll explain my reasons why.

In broad terms, the starting position in law is that a bank is expected to process payments and withdrawals that a customer authorises it to make. There is no dispute here that Mr F authorised the payments. And in accordance with the Payment Services Regulations and the terms and conditions of the account, Mr F is responsible for the loss.

However, taking into consideration the relevant regulatory rules and guidance, codes of practice and good industry practice, Revolut should take steps to identify and where possible prevent sufficiently unusual or uncharacteristic payments to help protect its customers from financial harm resulting from fraud. So, I've thought about whether Revolut acted fairly and reasonably here.

Revolut did not intervene in any of the payments Mr F made towards the scam. Considering the value of the payments, that they were being sent internationally, and there were

payments of approximately £21,000 made in a day, I think Revolut ought to have been concerned that Mr F might be at an increased risk of financial harm from fraud and intervened. In doing so I think it ought reasonably to have enquired further about the purpose of the payments.

While I think Revolut ought to have done more here, I must also consider whether it could have uncovered the scam and prevented the loss had it intervened as I think it ought to have done. I'm not persuaded it could.

I think it is important to highlight that where the evidence is limited, I must make a decision on the balance of probabilities, that is, what I consider to be most likely to have happened based on the information that is available and the wider circumstances at play at the time of the event.

Had Revolut questioned Mr F it would have known that the payments were for investment purposes and the name of the firm he was investing with. I've conducted my own research and found limited information at the time the payments were made about the firm that would indicate that the investment was a scam. There were no warnings published by the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) nor were there any warnings provided by the International Organization of Securities Commission (IOSCO). Both of which I would expect banks and e-money providers such as Revolut to monitor. The firm is also registered on Companies House adding to the appearance of legitimacy. I accept the firm was not authorised by the FCA, but that does not automatically mean it is fraudulent. This is also something Mr F ought to have been aware of as it is stated in the documentation he was provided by the firm and on its website.

Mr F has provided much information regarding the investment firm and its CEOs which he thinks Revolut ought to have taken into account at the time. I think it's important to bear in mind that Mr F said he had conducted research and read reviews about the firm before he invested. I would expect that if the information he found indicated it was a scam he would have stopped. Mr F's in-depth research, particularly into the background of the CEOs, took place in retrospect and I find the information he has provided would have required a greater level of investigation than I could fairly or reasonably expect Revolut to have conducted at the time.

While the expected returns were high, they did not appear significantly out of place so that it would have raised alarm bells when considering the high-risk nature of the investment Mr F was taking part in. Mr F was not asked to download remote access software, he did not receive unexpected communication from a scammer and was not assisted or guided by anyone or coerced to make the payments. So, I do not find the scam bore the hallmarks of common scams at the time. As such, I think it is unlikely that Revolut could have told Mr F with any certainty that he was falling victim to a scam, however it ought reasonably to have given a general scam warning.

I have considered whether a warning of this nature would have impacted Mr F positively and prevented the loss and I don't think it would. This is because, this was a sophisticated and complex scam, Mr F had been provided with documentation by the firm and given access to a platform on which he could see his deposits and the return on his investment. The firm has a professional looking website and Mr F was able to contact its customer service team both over the phone and in email. Mr F had previously taken part in a similar investment which was legitimate, the scam investment bore many of the same features as his previous investment, so I think this would have further convinced him that it was genuine. Without Revolut informing Mr F it was a scam, on balance I think it is unlikely that a general warning highlighting common features of a scam, such as the use of remote access software, the involvement of a broker and unexpected contact from the firm, would have resonated with

his circumstances and caused him to stop making payments.

Mr F told us he was vulnerable at the time and more susceptible to scams. I'm sorry to hear of the loss of his parents in the year prior and I understand this would have been a challenging time for him. I'm also aware that he was saving to purchase a property. However I cannot see that Mr F told Revolut about his circumstances and I do not find there was sufficient information available that might have indicated to Revolut that Mr F might be vulnerable and at greater risk of falling victim to a scam.

Unfortunately, the scam was not reported to Revolut until several years later, and as the payments were made to an international bank, I find there were no real prospects of recovering the funds Mr F lost. Nevertheless Revolut contacted the beneficiary bank, however it has not been able to recover the funds.

I've thought carefully about everything that happened, I appreciate that Mr F has been a victim of a cruel scam and the loss he incurred is significant, but I could only hold Revolut responsible if I thought any errors on its part would have made a material difference and I'm not persuaded they would. As such I cannot fairly or reasonably expect it to reimburse Mr F the money he lost.

My final decision

For the reasons outlined above, my final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr F to accept or reject my decision before 23 October 2025.

Oluwatobi Balogun
Ombudsman