

The complaint

Mrs K complains that Revolut Ltd won't reimburse her after she paid money for services that she now considers to have been a scam.

What happened

Mrs K has explained that she was getting married and was looking for someone to provide a bridal hair service. Mrs K made a payment to a hairdresser for 550 Euros by faster payment, however says that the hairdo lasted less than an hour. Mrs K attempted to get a refund from the hairdresser directly, who refused this, as they said they had recommended Mrs K use hair extensions, which she hadn't done. Mrs K says she was never told they could only work with hair extensions.

Mrs K considers that the service should be covered under Revolut's buyer protection policy, as she considers the service was both not delivered, and also mis-sold to her.

Revolut considered Mrs K's claim but declined it, as it thought the matter was a civil dispute between Mrs K and the hairdresser. Mrs K remained unhappy and referred her complaint to our service.

An Investigator reviewed Mrs K's claim but didn't uphold it. He said that the payment wasn't covered by Revolut's buyer protection policy as this only applies to 'Revolut Pay' transactions, which this wasn't. He considered whether any reimbursement schemes could be applied to the payment, but also didn't think these applied, as Mrs K's payment was made internationally and he also considered this was a civil matter between Mrs K and the hairdresser, rather than a scam.

Mrs K remained unhappy. She considered she had a valid claim for negotiating a refund following the service she received, that Revolut's payment methods should cover consumer rights where adequate services aren't provided and that Revolut has an obligation to investigate. Mrs K's complaint has therefore been referred 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.

I'm very sorry to hear that Mrs K paid a significant sum of money for a bridal service and was so disappointed with the results. And I can totally understand her strength of feeling given the importance of the day.

As a starting point in law, Mrs K is responsible for payments she's instructed Revolut to make. Unfortunately, there's little protection available to her for bank transfer payments, like this was.

Revolut does offer a buyer protection policy as part of its account terms, but this specifically only applies to 'Revolut Pay' transactions. As this wasn't how Mrs K made her payment, I can't consider whether the payment further meets the policy's requirements.

I've therefore gone on to consider whether there are any other reimbursement schemes under which Mrs K would be protected. Mrs K's payment was made after the Payment Systems Regulator introduced the APP Scam Reimbursement (ASR) rules on 7 October 2024. However the rules don't cover international payments (as this was), and in any event requires the customer to have been the victim of an Authorised Push Payment (APP) scam, which is defined as:

'Where a person uses a fraudulent or dishonest act or course of conduct to manipulate, deceive or persuade a Consumer into transferring funds from the Consumer's Relevant account to a Relevant account not controlled by the Consumer, where:

- The recipient is not who the Consumer intended to pay, or*
- The payment is not for the purpose the Consumer intended'*

Private civil disputes are not covered by the rules. The term private civil dispute is defined in the rules as:

'A dispute between a Consumer and payee which is a private matter between them for resolution in the civil courts, rather than involving criminal fraud or dishonesty.'

The Payment Systems Regulator in its published policy statement PS23/3 gives further guidance:

"2.6 Civil disputes do not meet our definition of an APP fraud as the customer has not been deceived [...] The law protects consumer rights when purchasing goods and services, including through the Consumer Rights Act."

It provides an example of when this might apply:

"...such as where a customer has paid a legitimate supplier for goods or services but has not received them, they are defective in some way, or the customer is otherwise dissatisfied with the supplier."

In the circumstances of Mrs K's complaint, I think the payment that she made to the hairdresser would be classified as a civil dispute. Mrs K made a payment to the individual she intended, and for the purpose she intended. However, she doesn't think the service provided aligns with what was agreed, or the price charged. I consider this aligns with the definition referenced here for a private civil dispute, whereby Mrs K has paid for goods and services but has not received them or is dissatisfied with the supplier. The ASR rules can also therefore not be applied to Mrs K's complaint.

I've thought about whether there are any other reasons that Revolut should reimburse Mrs K – but I don't consider there are. The payment wasn't so unusual that Revolut ought to have intervened, prior to processing it – and in any event, even if it had, Mrs K would've advised that the payment was for her bridal hair, which wouldn't have raised concerns with Revolut. I also don't consider there is a reason for Revolut to have contacted the merchant here, as it considered the matter a civil dispute and therefore has no grounds to interfere, request a recall of funds, or negotiate on Mrs K's behalf.

For these reasons, while I'm sorry to disappoint Mrs K, I don't think there's any reason to hold Revolut liable for the payment she made and I'm therefore not recommending it reimburses her in full, or part, for her losses.

My final decision

My final decision is I don't uphold Mrs K's complaint against Revolut Ltd.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs K to accept or reject my decision before 10 March 2026.

Kirsty Upton
Ombudsman