

The complaint

Mr O is unhappy that Revolut Ltd have refused to refund transactions he said he didn't authorise.

What happened

Mr O contacted Revolut to dispute numerous transactions totalling around £1,500 to a merchant based in Dubai. All the payments were completed in just over five minutes. Mr O said he couldn't have carried them out as he wasn't in Dubai at the time.

Mr O also said Revolut should have identified the transactions as suspicious and prevented them from leaving his account.

Revolut looked into the matter for Mr O but didn't uphold his complaint or provide a refund. In summary, Revolut said that the transactions were made using Mr O's virtual card which had been added to a digital wallet, and which could only reasonably have been set up by Mr O or with his involvement.

Unhappy with Revolut's response, Mr O referred his complaint to our Service.

Mr O told us that his phone and card have always been in his possession, and he has never authorised anyone else to use his card or account. In relation to this, Revolut told us that it was the virtual card that was added to the digital wallet which have different credentials to the physical card. Mr O confirmed that nobody else has biometrics registered on his device and he hasn't shared his security details with anyone. Mr O explained that he didn't recall writing down his security details but, if he had, this would likely have been on a messaging app.

One of our Investigators looked into Mr O's complaint but didn't recommend it was upheld. The Investigator's view was that Mr O consented to the disputed transactions because he was more likely than not involved in setting up the digital wallet which was used for the transactions. The Investigator also said that the timeline of when the card was added to the digital wallet and then used, wasn't typical fraudulent behaviour.

Mr O didn't accept the Investigator's view and said that he had not consented to setting up a digital wallet on any device other than his own.

As an agreement couldn't be reached, the complaint was then passed to me for a decision. After reviewing the information on file, I requested additional information from Revolut to demonstrate how the transactions were authenticated.

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.

When deciding this complaint, I have given regard to the Payment Services Regulations

2017 (PSRs 2017).

I've reviewed evidence of Revolut's internal system which show details of the disputed transactions including the payment method used. Based on this evidence, I'm satisfied that all the payments were authenticated through the digital wallet.

But the PSRs 2017 state evidence of authentication alone isn't sufficient to show the transactions were authorised. Under the PSRs 2017, Revolut can generally only hold Mr O liable for transactions that he either made himself or authorised someone else to make.

I've seen evidence which shows the steps someone would need to complete to add a card to a digital wallet. The evidence demonstrates that a card couldn't be added without a one-time-passcode (OTP) being inputted which means that a third party couldn't add Mr O's card to a digital wallet and use it to make purchases, without first obtaining the OTP.

Revolut have shown that in Mr O's case, the OTP was sent through the mobile app and inputted correctly. Following this, Revolut have said that a text was sent to the mobile number linked to Mr O's account, which matches the number Mr O provided to us. Mr O has confirmed he received the text but doesn't recall receiving notification of the OTP through the app or sharing the OTP with anyone. So, I've considered the likelihood of a third-party managing to obtain the OTP from Mr O's phone.

Mr O has said his phone remained in his possession and nobody else had access to it. This means that for a third party to have added Mr O's card to a digital wallet on their device and carry out the disputed transactions without Mr O's knowledge, they would have needed to take his device and replace it without him noticing. They'd also need to have bypassed the security on Mr O's phone and Revolut app to access the OTP. Or, alternatively, Mr O's device could have been accessed remotely but there's been no suggestion this was the case.

Mr O has accounted for his physical card which he says was in his possession at all times – but it was the virtual card that was added to the digital wallet. The virtual and physical card have different credentials and so a third party wouldn't need to access the physical card in order to add the virtual card to a wallet. Revolut's virtual cards are usually stored within the mobile app and so it's more likely that if a third party was to obtain the virtual card details, they would need to access Mr O's Revolut app. As above, this would likely involve bypassing various security measure on both Mr O's phone and Revolut app – either remotely or by taking and replacing his device without his knowledge – which seems unlikely.

Usually I'd expect a fraudster to use any security credentials quickly, but in Mr O's case there was a gap of around one month between the card being added to the digital wallet and the disputed transactions.

Overall, there's no plausible explanation for how a third party was able to obtain the OTP and register Mr O's card to the digital wallet, without his consent. So, on balance, I think Mr O more likely than not consented to the token being created and therefore gave consent for the transactions that followed. As a result, I'm satisfied that the disputed transactions were authorised and it's therefore reasonable for Revolut to hold Mr O liable for them.

Finally, I've also considered whether Revolut ought to have blocked the transactions as Mr O has suggested. Revolut have explained that the transactions didn't flag as suspicious because they were of a low value and were made using a digital wallet so were deemed to be authorised.

Having carefully considered both Mr O and Revolut's comments, I don't think the value, as a whole or individually, or pattern of transactions is such that they ought reasonably to have triggered Revolut's fraud detection system.

It's clear Mr O feels very strongly about his complaint and so my decision will likely be disappointing for him. But, for the reasons set out above, I won't be asking Revolut to do anything further here.

My final decision

My final decision is that I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr O to accept or reject my decision before 11 November 2025.

Freyja Dudley
Ombudsman