

The complaint

Mrs T is unhappy Remitly UK Ltd will not refund the money she lost as the result of a scam.

What happened

As both parties are aware of the details of the scam, I will not repeat them in full here. In summary, Mrs T fell victim to a job/task scam. She responded to an online advert and was offered the opportunity to complete tasks online (rating apps) to earn commission. She was told that to access the tasks she first needed to deposit funds. She made the following international payments to two different recipients.

payment	Date	time	value
1	10-Dec-24	12:00	£1,500
2	10-Dec-24	12:16	£1,790
3	10-Dec-24	19:45	£1,500

Mrs T made other payments as part of the same scam using Remitly, but the bank she used to fund them refunded them, so they are not included in this complaint.

Mrs T realised she had been scammed when she kept needing to send more funds before she could withdraw her commission. She contacted Remitly on 18 June 2025 to see if it could refund the money after one of her banks had rejected her refund claim.

Remitly says all payments were issued in line with Mrs T's instructions, but it would refund the fees of £32.89 as a gesture of goodwill. It noted Mrs T had not been honest when asked about the reason for the payments, and her use of the account for commercial purposes was in breach of her user agreement.

Our investigator did not uphold Mrs T's complaint. She said Remitly did not need to intervene before processing the payments. However, it had asked about the purpose of the payments, but Mrs T had not been honest.

Mrs T disagreed and asked for an ombudsman's review. She said Remitly could have done more. It should have seemed amiss that she was transferring money to Eastern European sounding names and locations saying this was for her family. That should have been questioned further. She also asked why Remitly would refund the fees unless it was admitting liability.

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 have also taken into account relevant law and regulations; regulators' rules, guidance and standards; codes of practice; and, where appropriate, what I consider to have been good industry practice at the time.

I'm sorry to disappoint Mrs T but I'm not upholding her complaint. I know she's been the victim of a cruel job/task scam but I don't think Remitly has acted unfairly or unreasonably. I'll explain why.

In broad terms, the starting position at law is that a money transfer/payment service provider (in this case, Remitly) is expected to process payments and withdrawals that a customer authorises it to make, in accordance with the terms and conditions of the account.

Here, Mrs T authorised the payments in dispute and that's accepted by all parties. And under the Payment Service Regulations 2017 (which are the relevant regulations in place here) that means Mrs T is responsible for the payments. That remains the case even though Mrs T was the unfortunate victim of a scam. But it does not end there.

There are times however when we would expect a payment service provider to question a transaction, even though it may have been properly authorised. Broadly speaking, firms (like Remitly) have certain obligations to protect customers from various risks, including fraud and scams.

So in this case, I first need to decide whether Remitly acted fairly and reasonably in its dealings with Mrs T when she made the payments, or whether it should have done more than it did.

I've thought about this carefully. And in doing so, it is important to take into consideration why customers use payment service providers such as Remitly. The primary purpose is to send payments, often in a particular currency, internationally. Payments are typically for friends or family members and payments can range from one-off low amounts or regular amounts through to one-off larger amounts.

So when Mrs T used Remitly to make these international payments, I don't think there was anything unusual or remarkable about them that ought to have alerted Remitly to the possibility Mrs T might be at risk of financial harm. It follows I wouldn't expect it to have intervened in any way before following Mrs T's payment instructions.

There were multiple payments on one day, but this in itself cannot be seen as a red flag in the circumstances. It is important to remember that payment service providers such as Remitly aren't like banks where there is an ongoing relationship between the parties that allows regular monitoring of accounts in order to detect and possibly prevent financial harm. This can make it inherently more difficult for a business such as Remitly to identify that a customer is at risk of financial harm where there isn't historic usage, or a pattern of typical account activity.

Here, from the evidence I have seen it seems there wasn't a historic relationship between the parties. Mrs T had opened an account on 2 December 2024 but deleted it the following day. So Remitly didn't have a history of payments, or account usage, to refer to in determining whether the payments could be classed as unusual or out of character. The only history it had was the payments Mrs T made as a result of the scam. And none of the payments in question that Mrs T made were of such a value that they would have appeared remarkable to Remitly. They weren't made in rapid succession. Whilst Mrs T knew it was unusual for her to send money to the country in question, Remitly did not know this. I can't see there was anything that should have suggested Mrs T was at risk given Remitly's core purpose is to allow people to send money internationally, quickly and easily.

Mrs T and our investigator discussed whether Remitly did enough when it asked her about

the reason for the payments, and whether her response ought to have triggered more checks. I need not comment further on this as my finding is that Remitly did not need to intervene before processing the payments.

Overall, while I appreciate Mrs T has been the unfortunate victim of a cruel scam, I cannot fairly hold Remitly liable for her loss.

I have then considered if Remitly did what we would expect to recover Mrs T's money once she notified it of the scam. As Mrs T did not ask Remitly to try to recover the fundd until around six months later there was no reasonable prospect of any money remaining in the scammers' accounts. Therefore, I do not find its failure to recover any funds was a shortcoming on its part.

It follows I am not instructing Remitly to refund any money to Mrs T. I'm sorry Mrs T has lost a considerable amount of money and I can understand why she would like to be compensated for her loss. I do accept Mrs T has fallen victim to a sophisticated scam. But I can only consider whether Remitly, which had no involvement in the scam itself, should be held responsible for what happened. For the reasons set out above I do not find Remitly can be held liable in the circumstances of this case.

If Mrs T wishes to accept Remitly's offer of a fee refund she can let our investigator know. She will need to submit her bank account number, IBAN & SWIFT code, sort code and bank name and address. Mrs T suggested that this offer was an admission of guilt. I disagree as it made clear it was a goodwill gesture. This is typically an action a firm takes when it wasn't at fault, yet wishes to maintain a positive relationship.

My final decision

I am not upholding Mrs T's decision.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs T to accept or reject my decision before 10 February 2026.

Rebecca Connelley
Ombudsman