

The complaint

Mrs B complains about the actions of Monzo Bank Ltd when she lost money to a scam.

What happened

Mrs B has explained that in August 2024 she fell victim to a cruel job scam. Mrs B has told us she was searching for work when she was contacted by someone posing as a recruiter for a company offers travel services online. The company name given appeared to relate to a large online business. Information about the proposed job, pay and systems used were provided by the scammers. Mrs B has explained she was also added to what appeared to be a WhatsApp group chat where other people shared success stories.

Mrs B completed online tasks required and saw some initial success as her commission appeared to grow. But when new job tasks were added and the systems balance dropped below £0 Mrs B was told she needed to pay money to be able to complete the next task and withdraw commission. Mrs B was instructed to use a service by a business I'll refer to as R that provides international transfers. Mrs B was persuaded to make the following payments from her Monzo account to R:

Payment	Date	time	Recipient	Amount
1	26/08/2024	10:25	R	£48.99
2	27/08/2024	09:02	R	£200.99
3	27/08/2024	10:01	R	£421.99
4	27/08/2024	12:51	R	£943.99
5	27/08/2024	17:09	R	£1,934.00
6	28/08/2024	09:04	R	£2,505.44
7	28/08/2024	10:02	R	£2,334.99
			Total	£8,390.39

Mrs B went on to raise a scam claim with Monzo after she was unable to withdraw her funds from the scammers and was asked to pay more money. Monzo considered Mrs B's claim but didn't agree it was responsible for her loss and didn't agree to issue a refund.

In May 2025 representatives acting on Mrs B's behalf complained to Monzo. No final response was issued as Monzo says it was waiting for additional information, including evidence Mrs B's representatives had authority to act on her behalf.

An investigator at this service looked at Mrs B's complaint. They didn't think Monzo had made a mistake or treated Mrs B unfairly by approving payments 1 to 6 without intervention. The investigator thought Monzo should've intervened before approving Payment 7 given the amount Mrs B had sent that day. But the investigator didn't think an intervention from Monzo would've made a difference as Mrs B's chat history with the scammers showed she was coached into providing misleading information when R challenged a previous payment.

Mrs B's representatives asked to appeal and said her Monzo account history showed the payments made to R were unusual. They also said a warning from Monzo would've carried significant weight and authority, potentially causing Mrs B to question the legitimacy of the payments she was making and guidance she received from the scammers.

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 aware I've summarised the events surrounding this complaint in less detail than the parties involved. No discourtesy is intended by my approach which reflects the informal nature of this service. I want to assure all parties I've read and considered everything on file. I'm satisfied I don't need to comment on every point raised to fairly reach my decision. And if I don't comment on something, it's not because I haven't considered it. It's because I've focused on what I think are the key issues. My approach is in line with the rules we operate under.

All parties agree that Mrs B authorised the payments in question. Under the Payment Services Regulations 2017 and terms of Mrs B's account, Monzo is expected to process payments she instructs. Mrs B is presumed liable for the loss in the first instance.

However, taking the law, regulations, relevant industry guidance, codes of practice and good industry practice into account, there are situations where it may be appropriate for Monzo to complete additional checks or take further precautions before processing a payment in order to help protect the customer from the risk of financial harm by way of fraud.

In this case, Monzo didn't intervene when approving any of the payments Mrs B made to R in August 2024. Monzo says the payments weren't sufficiently unusual to have required either an automated intervention or direct contact from its agents to warn Mrs B about the risk of fraud. I can see our investigator looked at Mrs B's Monzo account history and took the view the payments in question weren't unusual which meant they didn't think an intervention was needed before Payment 7. Mrs B's representatives responded to say the payments were unusual when compared with her account history.

I've looked at the account history and can see Mrs B appears to have mainly used it for savings, moving funds between her current account and the linked pot account. I can see Mrs B did make some faster payments, the highest of which was £360 on 17 May 2024. As Mrs B's representatives have said, the larger transactions were transfers between Mrs B's Monzo accounts. But I think it's fair to note the payments made on 26 August 2024 and 27 August 2024 were all of reasonably modest amounts. And I think it's fair to say that Monzo had to strike a balance between processing payments as directed and protecting customers from fraud. Overall, I'm satisfied the decisions to approve the first five payments were reasonable.

Our investigator thought that Monzo should've intervened from Payment 7. So I need to decide whether an intervention from Monzo on payment 7 (or an earlier payment) would've likely uncovered the scam.

I've read all the messages between Mrs B and the scammers, going back to when she accepted the proposed job offer. I can see Mrs B was given convincing information about the opportunity, told about the income she would receive and given access to the system required to complete reviews. In my view, Mrs B was very much taken in by the information she was given by the scammers.

I can also see that shortly after Payment 5 was made by Monzo, R contacted Mrs B with questions about the next payment she wanted it to make. Mrs B went on to discuss the intervention from R with the scammers. In messages with the scammers, Mrs B said she wasn't sure if the payment she wanted to make would be authorised. The scammers told Mrs B to give R a logical reason for sending funds abroad and not to mention the payment was to complete tasks or investment. Mrs B confirmed she would just say she was buying something instead. In addition, in the online chats Mrs B later had with Monzo after reporting the scam, she said that when asked she confirmed the payment was for something else, not for doing tasks. R appears to have been persuaded by the information Mrs B provided and further payments were approved.

I understand that Mrs B's representatives have said that a similar intervention from Monzo would've likely led to a different outcome as it would've carried additional weight. But I think the fact Mrs B was being coached by the scammers when R intervened and agreed to provide inaccurate responses to get around the checks being completed strongly indicates she would've done the same if Monzo had taken a similar approach by sending an automated or in app warning. Based on the intervention from R, I think Mrs B would've most likely proceeded despite an automated intervention from Monzo. I haven't been persuaded an intervention of that nature would've led to a different outcome. I'm very sorry to disappoint Mrs B but, for largely the same reasons as the investigator, I haven't been persuaded there are grounds to award a refund of the payments in question.

I've considered whether Monzo took reasonable steps to try and recover Mrs B's losses. But I think it's reasonable to note the payments were sent from Monzo to an account in Mrs B's name with R. The funds were then sent via separate payments to the scammers and lost. As we know Mrs B went on to use the funds she sent to R to make payments to the scammers there was no reasonable way Monzo could've recovered them.

When raising the complaint, Mrs B's representatives said she was vulnerable at the time so Monzo should've given consideration to her circumstances. But I can only ask Monzo to take Mrs B's vulnerabilities into account if it was aware of them or should reasonably have been aware. I haven't seen anything in the information provided that shows Monzo was aware Mrs B was vulnerable when she was making the payments in question or that it should reasonably have identified her as so. As a result, I'm unable to reach the view Monzo treated Mrs B unfairly due to her vulnerabilities.

My final decision

My decision is that I don't uphold Mrs B's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs B to accept or reject my decision before 11 March 2026.

Marco Manente
Ombudsman