

The complaint

Mr H complains that Revolut Ltd (“Revolut”) will not refund the money he lost to a scam.

What happened

The background is known to both parties, so I won’t repeat every detail. In summary, Mr H says he came across a crypto-investment opportunity on social media that appeared to be endorsed by well-known public figures. After registering his interest, he was contacted by an individual—later identified as a scammer—who told him they would manage his ‘investment’.

Mr H says he was led to believe that all he needed to do was pay money into the scheme and that the investment process was backed by AI-driven tools. He was given access to an online portal that appeared to show his initial £200 investment growing to £4,000 within two weeks. As part of the process, he was guided to open a new Revolut account and an account with a crypto-platform to facilitate payments. He says remote access software was used and I’m aware that loans were taken out to fund the scam. Complaints about the loan-related issues have been investigated by our Service under separate references.

By the time Mr H realised what had happened, more than £50,000 had been sent, in a series of payments, from his Revolut account to various recipients throughout August 2023. Those recipients were likely crypto-sellers in the peer-to-peer market. A complaint was raised with Revolut and then referred to our Service. Our Investigator considered it but didn’t uphold it.

In short, they found that Mr H had authorised the payments. They also noted that Revolut had intervened on several payments to gather more information. The Investigator was not persuaded Revolut could reasonably have prevented the scam based on the responses it received. As the matter couldn’t be resolved informally, it’s been passed to me for 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.

Having done so, I’ve reached the same conclusions as the Investigator. Mr H will understandably be disappointed, but these are the key reasons for my decision.

Authorisation

Under the relevant law, the Payment Services Regulations 2017 (PSRs), the starting point is Mr H is responsible for authorised payments from his account and, with some exceptions, Revolut is liable for unauthorised ones. Where a payment is ‘authorised’, that will often be because the customer has made the payment themselves. However, there are other circumstances where a payment can be considered authorised, such as where the customer has given permission for someone else to make a payment on their behalf or they’ve told their payment service provider they want a payment to go ahead.

It isn’t disputed that Mr H was the victim of a scam. However, the payments were made

using his mobile device. Revolut has explained that its app cannot be controlled remotely, and there is no evidence that anyone other than Mr H had possession of the device at the relevant times. The evidence shows Mr H believed the payments were part of an investment. He has told us that *“all transactions and all required actions were undertaken by me with his [the scammer] guidance via Anydesk”*. He also said he was aware that money was being taken from his account, although he didn't know where it was being sent. Even though Mr H followed the scammer's instructions, I'm satisfied that he took the payment steps himself and knew that payments were being made from his Revolut account. This aligns with the type of scam he described—making payments to what he believed to be a genuine investment—and with the responses he provided to Revolut during its interventions.

For the purposes of the PSRs, the payments can therefore fairly be treated as authorised, even though I recognise that the money was ultimately lost to a scam.

Prevention

In broad terms, Revolut is generally expected to process payments and withdrawals that a customer authorises, in line with the PSRs and the terms and conditions of the customer's account. But, taking into account regulatory expectations, requirements, and what I consider was good industry practice at the time, Revolut should have been alert to the possibility of fraud. In some situations, this means making additional checks before processing payments.

I've reviewed Mr H's account statements. Given some of the payment values and pattern of spending, I consider there was likely enough information for Revolut to regard some of the activity as suspicious. But, as referred to by the Investigator, Revolut did intervene.

The first intervention was on 17 August 2023, when Mr H attempted to make a payment to another individual's personal account. During the automated payment flow, Revolut asked for the purpose of the payment. Although “As part of an investment” was an available option, Mr H selected “something else”. He also confirmed that he wasn't paying someone he didn't know or had recently met online. Revolut then brought him into an in-app chat. Mr H was warned to be aware of scammers who use sophisticated techniques to obtain personal information and persuade customers to transfer funds as part of complex scams. Revolut explained that scammers can pose as financial institutions, online merchants, or promote exciting investment opportunities. After uploading a selfie to verify ID, Mr H confirmed he hadn't been asked to install remote-access software on his computer or phone.

Similar interventions took place when Mr H made further payments on 18 and 19 August 2023. In another intervention on 21 August 2023, Revolut asked if he had downloaded any remote-access or screen-sharing software, if he'd opened a Revolut account after seeing an investment opportunity advertised on social media, and whether he was buying cryptocurrencies. Mr H answered “no” to all these questions. When asked why he had opened the Revolut account, Mr H said it was “to use as an everyday bank and business payments”.

In response to questions about the nature of the payments, he explained “those are personal transfers... as you can see the transactions are coming from my business account, sole reason of transfers is to test how fast Revolut services work to see if I can build a future with Revolut or stick with the bank of mine”. He added “all the payees are connected to my business... I have business relationship with all the account owners to whom I sent funds to”. He reassured Revolut he was in control of the account, saying “based on your questions I assume that you have concerns that someone else has access to my Revolut account, I assure you that it's not the case and I'm in full control”.

I recognise that Mr H was acting under the scammer's instructions. He has explained that the scammer told him exactly what to press and when, and I appreciate that he was misled

into believing that the steps he was taking were simply “part of the system.” However, based on the responses Mr H gave during Revolut’s interventions, I’m not persuaded it would be fair to find that Revolut should have realised Mr H was falling victim to a scam—particularly an investment scam—or that the scam would have likely been exposed even if Revolut had probed further at times. The scam chat shows that Mr H checked back with the scammer during some of the interventions and relied on the scammer’s guidance when responding to Revolut. Mr H has told us the scammer was providing him with the answers to give. In my view, Mr H was heavily under the scammer’s influence. And, accepting his explanation that he was following the scammer’s instructions throughout, it’s again difficult to conclude that Revolut could reasonably have detected what was happening in these circumstances.

This isn’t a decision I’ve made lightly. I’m very sorry Mr H was scammed, and I recognise how deeply this experience has affected him. I fully accept that he was a victim, and I understand why he wants to do everything possible to recover his money. However, to hold Revolut responsible for those losses, I would need to be satisfied that proportionate steps on its part would likely have prevented what happened. For the reasons I’ve explained, I cannot fairly conclude that this is the more likely scenario. As for recovering the funds, I agree with the Investigator that there was little Revolut could have done once the scam was reported. I’ll add that because the recipients appear to have been sellers operating in the peer-to-peer market, Revolut would not have had a basis to request the return of those funds.

My final decision

For the reasons I’ve given, I don’t uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I’m required to ask Mr H to accept or reject my decision before 6 March 2026.

Thomas Cardia
Ombudsman