

The complaint

Mr P complains TSB Bank PLC (“TSB”) failed to protect him from financial harm when he fell victim to a scam.

What happened

The facts of this complaint are well-known to both parties, so I won’t repeat them in detail.

In short, Mr P says he fell victim to a ‘Job scam’ where he was asked to deposit money into an account to simulate purchases online in exchange for commission. Mr P says he was contacted over WhatsApp and introduced to this opportunity which promised his commission would be paid after the tasks were complete. Mr P says he injected over £26,000 but realised this was a scam when he was unable to withdraw any of the money.

Mr P says he paid the following payments from his TSB account to the scam:

Payment	Date	Beneficiary	Amount
1	04/11/24	ClearBank	£20
2	06/11/24	ClearBank	£50
3	09/11/24	ClearBank	£1,600
4	12/11/24	Crypto.com	£18,000 – BLOCKED
5	12/11/24	ClearBank	£25,000

TSB considered Mr P’s complaint but decided not to uphold it. It said that it had blocked the payment made to known a cryptocurrency exchange platform, as this is against its policy, and the payments made to ClearBank were not flagged as suspicious. TSB says it spoke to Mr P when Payment 4 was declined, and it provided a scam warning at this time. So, it feels it took reasonable steps to protect Mr P from financial harm.

Unhappy with TSB’s response, Mr P brought his complaint to our Service. Our investigator considered this complaint and initially upheld it in Mr P’s favour. However, after receiving further information and reviewing the complaint again, decided not to uphold it. Mr P wasn’t happy with this, so the complaint has been brought 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.

It is not in dispute that Mr P authorised the payment transactions in this matter. Generally, consumers are liable for payment transactions they have authorised. However, that is not

the end of the story. This is because even if a payment is authorised, there are regulatory requirements and good industry practice which suggest firms/banks – such as TSB – should be on the look-out for unusual and out of character transactions to protect their customers from financial harm. And, if such payment transactions do arise, firms should intervene before processing them. That said, firms need to strike a balance between intervening in a customer's payment to protect them from financial harm, against the risk of unnecessarily inconveniencing or delaying a customer's legitimate transactions.

Should TSB have realised Mr P was at risk of financial harm and intervened before allowing the payments to be made?

Payments 1 to 3 were not significantly high in value and there is nothing alarming about these payments which would cause me to think TSB should've realised Mr P was at risk of financial harm.

At Payment 4 Mr P was trying to make a £18,000 payment to an identifiable cryptocurrency trading platform. While this payment was not significantly larger than other payments on his account within the previous six months, TSB says it doesn't allow payments to known cryptocurrency trading platforms. This payment was blocked, and Mr P had to contact TSB to unblock his account. I've listened to this call I've heard that Mr P was asked some probing questions about the payment. He said he was making this payment to another account in his name, and that no one had pressured him into sending this money. He was also told that TSB thinks he is being scammed so it will not allow this payment to go through to the cryptocurrency provider.

I think the intervention made here was reasonable. It was a human intervention where the agent spoke directly to Mr P and explained that he might be at risk of a scam. She asked about whether he was pressured into making the payment, but Mr P said no and didn't say anything further about any third-party involvement. Instead, Mr P said he was making this payment himself to another account in his name, so TSB had no indication that he might be involved in a scam. And so, I don't think it would be fair to say TSB should've done anything further at this point.

Should TSB have intervened again in the payment series?

At Payment 5 Mr P had made several payments to ClearBank which were not disputed. So, this became a known beneficiary to the account. And during the phone call Mr P had just had with TSB that day, he stated he was paying this money to another account in his name. Mr P had, within the six months prior to this, made similarly large payments to other accounts in his name, so the value of this payment wouldn't have seemed suspicious or out of character. And as TSB had just spoken to Mr P about his recent banking activity and had no concerns, I think it is fair for TSB to have processed Payment 5 as instructed by Mr P and without any undue delay.

Mr P says TSB should've blocked all the payments to ClearBank as it also provides cryptocurrency services, so for the same reason it blocked Payment 4, it should've also blocked all his payments. However, I don't agree. As I've said above, I think it is reasonable that Payments 1,2,3 and 5 didn't raise any alarms, due to the fact that the beneficiary became a known beneficiary to the account, and the amount was not out of character for Mr P's account either. From my understanding ClearBank offers banking services and facilitates payments to and from many businesses, not just cryptocurrency providers. ClearBank itself is not a cryptocurrency exchange platform, although it does offer many other services involving cryptocurrency. TSB has made a decision to block certain firms, but I do not have the power to instruct it to block other companies or to change its processes around this. But overall, I don't see any reason why TSB ought to have intervened here.

Recovery

I'm satisfied that had TSB contacted the receiving bank as soon as it was aware of the fraud, this wouldn't have made a difference in the circumstances. This is because, unfortunately, at the time Mr P reported the fraud, the money had already been removed from the receiving account.

My final decision

I am not upholding this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr P to accept or reject my decision before 12 December 2025.

Sienna Mahboobani
Ombudsman