

The complaint

Ms K complains that Revolut Ltd hasn't protected her from losing money to a scam.

What happened

The background to this complaint is well known to both parties, so I won't repeat everything here. In brief summary, Ms K has explained that in June to September 2023 she made numerous transactions from her Revolut account for what she thought was a legitimate opportunity. Ms K subsequently came to believe that she'd been scammed and sought a refund from Revolut. Ultimately Revolut didn't reimburse her lost funds, and Ms K referred her complaint about Revolut to us. As our Investigator couldn't resolve the matter informally, the case has been passed to me for a 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.

I've focused on what I think is the heart of the matter here. If there's something I've not mentioned, it isn't because I've ignored it. I haven't. I'm satisfied I don't need to comment on every individual point or argument to be able to reach what I think is the right outcome. Our rules allow me to do this. This simply reflects the informal nature of our service as a free alternative to the courts.

Having done so, I've decided to not uphold this complaint for materially the same reasons as our Investigator.

First, let me say, if Ms K has been the victim of a scam, she has my heartfelt sympathy. Ultimately, however, Ms K has suffered this loss because of fraudsters, and this doesn't automatically entitle her to a refund from Revolut. It would only be fair for me to tell Revolut to reimburse Ms K her loss (or part of it) if I thought Revolut reasonably ought to have prevented the transactions (or some of them) in the first place, or Revolut unreasonably hindered recovery of the funds after the transactions had been made; and if I was satisfied, overall, this was a fair and reasonable outcome.

I'm satisfied Ms K authorised the relevant payments. Revolut would generally be expected to process payments a customer authorises it to make. And under The Payment Services Regulations and the terms and conditions of the account, Ms K is presumed liable for the loss in the first instance, in circumstances where she authorised the payments. That said, as a matter of good industry practice Revolut should have taken proactive steps to identify and help prevent transactions – particularly sufficiently unusual or uncharacteristic transactions – that could involve fraud or be the result of a scam. However, there are many payments made by customers each day and it's not realistic or reasonable to expect Revolut to stop and check every payment instruction. There's a balance to be struck between identifying payments that could potentially be fraudulent, and minimising disruption to legitimate payments (allowing customers ready access to their funds).

In this case, as our Investigator explained, Revolut did intervene in some of the payments, as I understand also did who I'll call Bank H, a third-party bank Ms K also instructed some payments from flowing from these circumstances. And I agree with what our Investigator concluded overall about this. I would expect Revolut to have questioned Ms K more robustly than it did on the 19 July 2023, the day Ms K instructed the two payments for £7,450 and £7,900 respectively. This is because although Revolut asked questions to satisfy itself that Ms K wasn't falling victim to a safe account scam, it missed an opportunity to ask some further questions such as what Ms K's payments were for, and what the context was, and to check whether everything appeared in order. However, I think for the same reasons as our Investigator explained, that even if Revolut had done this, this most likely wouldn't have changed what happened. I think it's most likely Ms K would have instructed these transactions and the later ones anyway.

I say this because I've listened to a recording of a call Bank H had with Ms K on 17 July 2023. And during this call, Bank H asked Ms K about the purpose of her payment. Ms K said she was purchasing a financial education training program. She said she was transferring money to a cryptocurrency provider so she could pay for the program in the right currency. Bank H asked her how she'd come across the program and Ms K said through various friends who'd been using it, and that they'd had no problems with it, and she herself had purchased a small program with them previously and it had been absolutely fine and she now wanted to purchase the next level up. Bank H explained that crypto was prime for scams, and warned her that she could be being scammed, that scammers can be very convincing. But Ms K confirmed she was happy with everything and wanted to proceed.

And ultimately, I think it's most likely that if Revolut had intervened more robustly and proportionately on 19 July 2023 (which was just two days after the call above I've referenced between Ms K and Bank H) that essentially the same thing would have happened – with Revolut giving Ms K fraud and scams warnings but Ms K ultimately explaining that she still wanted to go ahead. I say this not only because of how her call with Bank H panned out, but also due to the level of belief Ms K likely had in the opportunity she was involved with at the time. Cryptocurrency-investment-type fraud warnings didn't dissuade, and likely wouldn't have dissuaded, Ms K. And I think any level of scrutiny or concern expressed about the opportunity Ms K was involved with likely would not have caused her the level of concern that would have stopped her making the payments. Ms K's own testimony is that she was taken on a three-day retreat paid for by a leader in the company, and that one of the main leaders within the company was training her, and that everything was convincing and reassuring about the direction and future of the community around the opportunity. Such that, I'm sorry for Ms K, but I cannot fairly say that proportionate intervention from Revolut would likely have resulted in Ms K doing anything other than what she actually did in this instance which was make these transactions from her Revolut account. Ultimately I have to be fair and I can't say I'd expect an interrogation from Revolut – only proportionate fraud and scams warnings based on how Ms K interacted with them.

I can't see that any of the transactions made other than on 19 July 2023 ought to have attracted further intervention, or that anything would have been fundamentally different at those points than what I've said above. And ultimately I note from what Ms K has said that it wasn't until later in the year that she became concerned that something might be wrong.

I'm also not persuaded there were any reasonable prospects of Revolut successfully recovering the funds when Ms K reported that she'd been scammed, given the funds had by then either already been converted through cryptocurrency providers and sent on and lost to the scammers from there, or sent to another account held in Ms K's name and lost to the scammers from there.

I'm sorry Ms K was scammed and lost this money. But despite my natural sympathy, I can't fairly tell Revolut to reimburse her in circumstances where I'm not persuaded it reasonably ought to have prevented the payments or to have recovered them.

My final decision

For the reasons explained, I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Ms K to accept or reject my decision before 27 October 2025.

Neil Bridge
Ombudsman