

The complaint

Mr O complains that Barclays Bank UK PLC won't refund money he has lost to a scam.

What happened

The details of the complaint are well known to both parties, so I will not repeat them in detail here. Instead, I have briefly summarised.

Mr O says he transferred around £56,000 to various crypto platforms between January 2022 and October 2023. He claims the payments ended up forming part of a well-known global scam and therefore wants Barclays to refund him the money he has lost, plus statutory interest and compensation.

Barclays attempted to review Mr O's complaint, but Mr O didn't provide relevant information to allow them to do so. Barclays confirmed Mr O's account closed in August 2022; and therefore, only around £22,500 of the claim formed part of money held with Barclays.

Mr O referred his complaint to our service through a professional representative. Our investigator asked Mr O for relevant information to allow her to carry out a thorough investigation; but Mr O, nor his representative provided it. Our investigator wrote to both parties to confirm that she couldn't reasonably say Barclays had done anything wrong when Mr O, nor his representative had provided relevant information to carry out a review.

Mr O asked for an ombudsman to review matters. So, it has been passed to me.

Earlier in September 2025, I issued a provisional decision. In it, I said;

- It isn't in dispute that Mr O authorised the payments in question. The starting position is that firms ought to follow the instructions given by their customers for legitimate payments to be made as instructed.
- However, there are some situations in which a payment service provider should reasonably have had a closer look at the circumstances surrounding a particular transfer. For example, if it was particularly out of character.
- Barclays doesn't consider the payment activity on Mr O's account to have been unusual enough to have warranted an intervention. From the evidence I have received, it appears that payments were made into Mr O's accounts through cash deposits.
- Most of the transactions raised were funded by cash deposits and Mr O hasn't been able to provide sufficient evidence to show where the cash came from. Mr O has explained he pawned jewellery but doesn't have any paperwork or other documentation to support this. Due to this, I can't be certain that the money in question legitimately belonged to Mr O and therefore, can't reasonably conclude Mr O's loss.

- I've also seen evidence that on the bank transfers which were made, Mr O was alerted with a scam warning. The evidence shows that Mr O confirmed the payment was going to 'friends and family'. Therefore, there's nothing to suggest that Mr O was uncertain or sceptical about what he was doing. So I don't think any further intervention from Barclays was necessary or would have likely made a difference.
- Given Mr O was also sending money to accounts in his own name, the 'friends and family' reason wouldn't have given Barclays any cause for concern that he was at risk of financial harm.
- So, in these circumstances, I don't consider it would be fair and reasonable to hold Barclays liable for Mr O's loss, because it seems more likely than not that he would have always made the payment, notwithstanding any scam warnings or intervention from Barclays.
- I'm also aware that Barclays did intervene on at least one of the payments. Mr O informed Barclays that he was purchasing currency due to going travelling and had carried out his own due diligence. Therefore, it doesn't appear that Mr O would have been truthful about the real intention of the transfers, even if Barclays did further intervene.
- I've also thought about whether Barclays could have done more to recover the money Mr O lost. Mr O didn't report the scam to Barclays, and the first they became aware of it was when the complaint was referred through the professional representative. As a lot of the transfers were made through debit card, Mr O had exceeded the 120 days to raise a chargeback claim and therefore it would have been too late for Barclays to raise a claim. We would also only expect Barclays to raise a chargeback if it was likely to be successful. Based on the available evidence this does not look like a chargeback claim that would have been successful.

So, I didn't think Barclays had acted inappropriately.

Mr O, through his representative, responded to my provisional decision but didn't have any further comments. Barclays didn't respond.

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.

Given that I haven't been provided with any evidence or information that contradicts my provisional findings, I see no reason to depart from these findings. It follows that it is my decision to not uphold Mr O's complaint as I do not consider Barclay's actions to be unfair or inappropriate in the circumstances.

My final decision

My final decision is that I don't uphold this complaint.

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

Hayley West

Ombudsman