

The complaint

Miss E complains Revolut Ltd acted unfairly by not refunding a payment she made using her debit card.

What happened

In December 2024, Miss E purchased a bracelet and trainers from a company I'll refer to as S. She paid a total of £4,697.95 using her Revolut debit card.

Miss E says she was unhappy with the bracelet, so returned it to S, via a courier service it arranged. The parcel was received by S in December 2024, but as a refund wasn't received, she contacted Revolut in January 2025 for help in getting her money back.

Revolut raised a chargeback with S, which is the process of asking the merchant for a refund via the card scheme provider – Visa in this case.

However, S defended the chargeback, saying it didn't agree a refund was due as Miss E hadn't returned the bracelet. It told Revolut Miss E had returned the trainers, for which she was issued a refund of £39 – but the bracelet was yet to be returned. Revolut reviewed all the evidence and decided to challenge S' defence and pursued the chargeback further, to the stage known as pre-arbitration. But as S continued to defend the claim, Revolut explained it was unable to take the matter further and closed Miss E's claim.

Following this, Miss E contacted S again about the issue. It confirmed it had now received the parcel Miss E said contained the bracelet, so she shared this information with Revolut and asked it to look at matters again.

Revolut said it was unable to re-open Miss E's chargeback and didn't change its position after she complained, so Miss E referred the matter to this Service.

An Investigator here reviewed matters. They considered Revolut had done as they'd expect in relation to the chargeback, as Miss E hadn't been able to evidence the bracelet had been returned, and S defended the dispute, there was nothing further Revolut could reasonably do.

Miss E disagreed and reiterated she'd provided sufficient evidence the bracelet had been returned, noting the weight of the package as 2kg. She also considered she'd previously provided evidence the bracelet had been received by S, but this hadn't been considered.

However, our Investigator didn't agree this was enough to confirm the bracelet was included, given its light weight.

As no agreement could be reached, the complaint was passed to me to decide.

As part of my review, I requested more information from both parties, in summary Miss E said:

- S confirmed on 30 June 2025 the bracelet was showing as having been returned,

and the information had been sent to its chargeback team.

- She didn't return the trainers – only the bracelet.

Revolut explained:

- When Miss E submitted her chargeback claim in January 2025 she'd not set out whether it was trainers or the bracelet that she'd attempted to return – only referring to the "order". As such, this wasn't clarified.
- Miss E had explained the colour of the item looked different to what was advertised, as such a chargeback had been pursued.

Following this, Miss E received a refund from S for the bracelet of £4,650 in October 2025. Miss E remained unhappy, saying Revolut should have done more to resolve this issue and for this she considered it should pay £350 compensation.

Our Investigator summarised everything that had happened, but concluded Revolut had handled the initial chargeback in the way they'd expect. And while Miss E had now received a refund from S, and wanted to complain about Revolut's handling of that - this wasn't a complaint she'd raised with Revolut. As such, it wasn't something that could be considered within this complaint.

Miss E remained unhappy and overall said Revolut's actions had a significant impact on her, causing further distress during a particularly difficult time.

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.

Firstly, I want to say how sorry I was to hear of the personal difficulties Miss E has faced. I can appreciate it has been a particularly hard time for her, and I'd like to thank Miss E for sharing that information with this Service. I've not repeated everything she's said here, as our decisions are published, but I want to assure Miss E I've read and taken onboard everything she's said.

I should also say I realise I've summarised this complaint in less detail than both parties. I've concentrated on what I consider to be the key issues. The rules that govern this service allow me to do so. But this doesn't mean I've not considered everything both parties have said.

In this decision I'll only be considering how Revolut handled the chargeback Miss E raised with it. I say that because, since referring her complaint to this Service, S has refunded Miss E. I'm aware she's unhappy with the length of time this took and considers Revolut didn't process the refund S provided as quickly as it should. But as our Investigator explained, that happened after Revolut issued its final response and isn't a complaint she's raised with Revolut, which she'll need to do first. Our Investigator is in touch with Miss E about that separately.

Chargeback

Chargeback allows for a request of a refund to be made of money paid with a plastic card in certain scenarios. I'm looking here at the actions of Revolut and whether it acted fairly and reasonably in the way it handled Miss E's request for help in getting her money back. This

will take into account the circumstances of the dispute and how S has acted, as well as other considerations, such as the card scheme rules, which Revolut must follow and its own obligations.

Chargebacks are not guaranteed to succeed, the recipient of the funds (S in this case) can choose to challenge or defend a chargeback if it doesn't think it is valid. But I would expect Revolut to attempt a chargeback, if there was a reasonable prospect of success, as it did here.

If a chargeback is challenged by the other side to the dispute, I would expect Revolut to look carefully at the submissions made by the other side and make a decision on whether to continue pursuing the chargeback considering the scheme rules. I would not expect Revolut to pursue it further if the submissions showed it no longer had a reasonable prospect of success.

In this case Revolut did attempt a chargeback. While it's not entirely clear which Visa dispute code was used, it seems more likely than not it was *"Not as Described or Defective Merchandise/Service"*. That's because Miss E said the bracelet she received was not as described, so this would have been the most reasonable code for Revolut to use. And, S' response to Revolut reflects this was the code it used.

Under this reason code, the rules then set out conditions that must be met (I've included those relevant to Miss E's dispute):

- *Before the Issuer may initiate a Dispute, the Cardholder must return, or attempt to return the merchandise*

The rules then go on to explain the merchant can dispute the cardholder's response by providing:

- *Evidence to prove that the Cardholder did not attempt to return the merchandise or that the returned merchandise has not been received.*

In this case, S defended the chargeback, saying Miss E had not returned the bracelet – instead she had returned the trainers. It provided evidence the tracking number Miss E had used was for trainers and it told Revolut a separate return was arranged, under a different tracking number, to return the bracelet. However, it said this was returned empty. S supported this by confirming a refund was sent to Miss E for the trainers.

Miss E has said she'd provided sufficient evidence the bracelet had been returned, and S said it was issuing a refund, but I don't agree. The evidence she's provided shows a package was returned to S, this unfortunately didn't confirm the contents of that package. And in regard to S' confirmation, this simply said any refund confirmation for the bracelet would be sent via email.

While it's since come to light the information S provided Revolut was incorrect – Miss E returned the bracelet, not the trainers – I don't think Revolut was unreasonable to rely on the information it had been given by S at the time. And it isn't for me to comment on the actions of S, as in this complaint I'm limited to considering the actions of Revolut.

At this point, had Revolut chosen not to pursue the chargeback further, I think that would have been reasonable. Given the defence by S, and that Miss E could only show a parcel had been returned, I don't think Revolut would have acted unfairly in not pursuing the chargeback further, as there wasn't a realistic prospect of success.

However, in this case, Revolut did pursue the matter further, to pre-arbitration but it continued to be defended by S. As such, there wasn't anything further Revolut could reasonably do.

On this point, I'm aware Miss E has provided information from a chat with Revolut in which it said:

"The dispute was handled by Revolut and was not escalated to Visa chargeback pre-arbitration".

However, I've also seen it escalated the matter to pre-arbitration on 12 February 2025. I don't know why Miss E was told this, but it's possible Revolut was instead referring to arbitration – which is a stage carried out by Visa – whereas pre-arbitration is a decision made by Revolut. Either way, as I've explained above, I don't think Revolut would have been acting unfairly by not pursuing the matter to pre-arbitration, or ultimately arbitration, in any case, given the strength of the evidence provided by S.

I'm aware Miss E also considers Revolut should have gone further in its investigation, such as asking S to provide CCTV of the parcel being opened. For Revolut as the card issuer, its role during a chargeback claim is to consider the evidence provided, against the scheme rules – it isn't responsible for gathering further evidence. So I wouldn't expect Revolut to take actions such as this.

It was only much later, once the complaint was with this Service that S provided clear confirmation it had located the bracelet and would issue a refund. I appreciate Miss E considers Revolut should have raised the matter again, based on the new evidence available, but I don't agree. Firstly, the chargeback rules, that Revolut must follow, explain a card issuer (here that's Revolut) can only initiate a dispute for the same transaction once – which it had already done. So had it done so, there wouldn't have been a realistic prospect of success. And in addition, by this point as S had confirmed a refund would be issued, it's reasonable Revolut didn't pursue the claim further.

Overall, while I appreciate this will come as a disappointment to Miss E I don't think Revolut has acted unfairly here. That's because, Miss E didn't initially have the evidence Revolut needed in which to pursue a successful chargeback for the payment made to S, taking account of the evidence S provided. And although Miss E later received confirmation from S the bracelet had been returned, it was already too late by that point as the chargeback had been closed. So I don't think it would have changed the outcome here. As such I won't be asking Revolut to do anything here.

My final decision

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

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss E to accept or reject my decision before 4 December 2025.

Victoria Cheyne
Ombudsman