

The complaint

Mrs R complains that Monzo Bank Ltd (“Monzo”) won’t refund her the money she lost after she fell victim to an Authorised Push Payment (‘APP’) scam.

In bringing her complaint to this service Mrs R is represented, however for ease of reading I will, in the main, refer to Mrs R within this decision.

What happened

The background to this complaint is well known to both parties and has been laid out in detail by our Investigator in their view, so I won’t repeat it all in detail here. But in summary, I understand it to be as follows.

In or around early 2025, Mrs R received a message, unexpectedly, from somebody claiming to be a recruiter, about a job opportunity. She was told the job entailed reviewing and rating products online to increase their rating, for which she would earn a salary and commission. Believing everything to be genuine, Mrs R proceeded, but unknown to her at the time, she had been contacted by fraudsters. The fraudsters then persuaded Mrs R to pay her own money in order to proceed with the work.

As part of the scam, as well as using accounts she already held, the fraudsters instructed Mrs R to open multiple accounts, with other payment service providers (including opening a Monzo account), as well as with cryptocurrency platforms.

To facilitate the payments Mrs R has said she used her own money, as well as borrowing money from friends and family and through taking out loans. Mrs R moved money between her own bank accounts and then, from these different accounts, including Monzo, the scam saw her making payments to cryptocurrency wallets she held in her own name. The funds were then converted into cryptocurrency and subsequently transferred into accounts that were controlled by the fraudsters.

Between 4 February 2025 and 11 February 2025, Mrs R made a number of transactions through her newly opened Monzo account in relation to the fraud, totalling £11,000. Our Investigator has laid these payments out in detail in their view, so I don’t intend to list them all again here.

Mrs R realised she’d been scammed when she was unable to withdraw any of the money she had sent and was asked by the fraudsters to continue making payments.

Mrs R raised the matter with Monzo, but it didn’t uphold her complaint. In summary, it said it had intervened but Mrs R had been untruthful with the information she had provided and so it wasn’t able to uncover the scam. It added that it had executed the payments in accordance with Mrs R’s instructions.

Unhappy with Monzo’s response, Mrs R brought her complaint to this service. One of our Investigators looked into things but didn’t think the complaint should be upheld. In summary, she thought Monzo had sufficiently intervened, but Mrs R chose not to disclose anything

about a remote working/new job. Our Investigator added that even if Monzo had done more to question Mrs R about the circumstances of the payments, she didn't think it would have made a difference. She said this as when Monzo did ask Mrs R questions she had given it inaccurate information, which had deprived Monzo of the opportunity to provide more relevant warnings about job scams.

Mrs R, through her representative, didn't agree with our Investigator's view. In summary, her representative said the payments made were highly concerning and should have triggered an urgent intervention by Monzo. They added that Monzo also should have been alert to the possibility of job scams. Overall, they didn't think the intervention had gone far enough and had it of done, it would have made a difference, and the scam would have been uncovered.

As agreement couldn't be reached, the complaint has been passed 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.

I'm very aware that I've summarised this complaint briefly, in less detail than has been provided, and in my own words. No discourtesy is intended by this. Instead, I've focussed 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.

I'm aware in their submissions Mrs R's representative has referred to other decisions issued by our service. But I would point out that, while on the surface complaints may seem quite similar, each complaint is determined by its own individual circumstances. Here, as I'm required to do, I've looked at the individual circumstances of Mrs R's complaint against Monzo.

Having thought about everything carefully, I agree with our Investigator, and I don't think Monzo is responsible for refunding the money Mrs R sadly lost. I'm sorry to hear that Mrs R has been the victim of a cruel scam. I know she feels strongly about this complaint, and this will come as a disappointment to her, so I'll explain why.

I'm satisfied Mrs R 'authorised' the payments for the purposes of the Payment Services Regulations 2017 ('the Regulations'), in force at the time. So, although she didn't intend the money to go to scammers, under the Regulations, and under the terms and conditions of her account, Mrs R is presumed liable for the loss in the first instance.

However, that isn't the end of the story. Good industry practice required that Monzo be on the lookout for payments that were out of character or unusual to the extent that they might have indicated a fraud risk. On spotting such a payment, I'd expect it to intervene in a manner proportionate to the risk identified.

In this case, I need to decide whether Monzo acted fairly and reasonably in its dealings with Mrs R when it processed the payments, or whether it should have done more than it did.

Firms, such as Monzo, process a high volume of transfers and transactions each day. And a balance has to be struck as to when it should possibly intervene on a payment(s) against not holding up or delaying its customer's requests. I'm also mindful here that Mrs R's Monzo account was newly opened. What this means is that Monzo would have had no historical

account activity, upon which to compare the transactions that were being made as part of this scam.

I can see that Monzo did intervene on a number of the payments Mrs R made. Mrs R has argued that this intervention didn't go far enough and had it done, it would have prevented the scam. However, having thought about this carefully I don't agree and I'm persuaded that even if I thought Monzo's intervention ought to have gone further than it did, I don't think it would have made a difference.

I say that as I'd also need to be persuaded that any further proportionate intervention/questioning would have made a difference and prevented the payments from being made. Of course I can't know for sure what would have happened, so I have to base my findings on the balance of probabilities – that is, what I think is more likely than not to have happened, taking into account what I know. The evidence here doesn't support that it's more likely than not that Mrs R would have heeded any further warnings from Monzo.

I say that as I've listened to the calls that Monzo *did* have with Mrs R and I've also considered interactions that Mrs R had with her other banking providers, when they spoke to her before allowing payments to be progressed. During these calls and when answering questions, about the purpose of the payments, Mrs R consistently gave Monzo and her other banking providers inaccurate answers. Which included; Mrs R giving inaccurate reasons for the payments when asked, including not indicating that the payments were related to a job when the opportunity to do so was there; saying that she hadn't been asked to transfer the cryptocurrency to a different wallet, when she had been asked to do this; confirming that she was acting alone and nobody was guiding her and saying that nobody had told her to lie to the bank or give a different payment purpose – which wasn't the case here, as I've seen the fraudsters had specifically instructed Mrs R to not tell her banks that the payments were related to a job. Importantly, Monzo, on multiple occasions, stressed to Mrs R the importance of her answering its questions truthfully.

The evidence of the messages that I've seen, between Mrs R and the fraudsters, show that she had been subject to social engineering and was being coached extensively by the fraudster. This coaching included Mrs R proactively reaching out to the fraudster to ask them how she should answer questions posed about the payments she was making. From what I've seen, Mrs R followed the fraudster's instructions, which I think is evident with what happened with Mrs R giving Monzo (and the providers of other accounts she held) inaccurate information about the purpose of the payments and moving passed warnings she had been given about potential scams. Indeed, in the circumstances of this case, during one of the calls Mrs R had with Monzo, it specifically detailed the key hallmarks of job scams to her, but she moved passed this, confirming to Monzo that she didn't recognise any of what she was being told with her own circumstances.

So, even if Monzo's intervention had gone further than it did, I think it's more likely than not Mrs R would've reverted to the fraudster, on how to answer any questions and would likely have done so in such a way as to avoid alerting Monzo to what was really happening. Sadly, it seems to me that she was so determined to make the payments that, even if further intervention from Monzo had gone as far as preventing her from making payments and blocking her account, she'd have simply sent the funds from another of her accounts. Which I'm satisfied is evident and supported by what she did here, when she was having difficulty making payments through different providers, she simply reverted to the fraudster to identify alternative options for making the payments and set up accounts with different providers in order to facilitate the payments.

I would add that I don't think Mrs R had any malicious intent in answering as she did. I do acknowledge she was under pressure and desperate to recover the money she had sent.

And the social engineering techniques fraudsters deploy can be very convincing. But in the circumstances of this case the evidence supports that she was so taken in by the fraudsters that she was unwavering in her determination to follow their instructions and proceed with the payments.

The weight of evidence I've seen persuades me that I think it more likely than not Mrs R would have continued to be guided by the fraudsters to provide answers that would have been clearly designed to allay any suspicions that the payments could be linked to a scam.

Sadly, based on the evidence I've seen it's clear that Mrs R was completely under the spell of the fraudsters, and I'm not persuaded Monzo has missed an opportunity here to have broken that spell.

I've thought about whether there was any opportunity for Monzo to have recovered the money Mrs R had lost once it was made aware of the scam. However, given the funds were ultimately exchanged into cryptocurrency and then moved on to accounts controlled by the fraudsters, I don't think there was any opportunity or prospect of Monzo being able to recover any of the money.

I don't intend any comments or findings I've made in this decision to downplay or diminish the impact this scam has had on Mrs R. It's very unfortunate she has lost this money in this way, and I understand the whole experience has been deeply upsetting and I do have a great deal of sympathy for her. But in the circumstances, having carefully considered everything, I don't find Monzo could have reasonably prevented Mrs R's loss here. Neither do I find there were any other failings on Monzo's part that would lead me to uphold this complaint.

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 Mrs R to accept or reject my decision before 15 January 2026.

Stephen Wise
Ombudsman