

The complaint

Mr R complains Monzo Bank Ltd won't refund transactions made from his account which he says he didn't make or authorise.

What happened

On 1 March 2025, Mr R reported several transactions, totalling £590, made from his account to Monzo as fraudulent. The transactions had all taken place in the early hours of that morning.

Monzo looked into the transactions. It said it wouldn't refund the transactions because the information it had suggested Mr R had authorised them. Following a complaint, Monzo still refused to refund the disputed transactions. So, Mr R referred his complaint to our service.

An Investigator considered the circumstances. She said, in summary, the evidence showed the transactions had been made via the Monzo App from Mr R's usual device. She noted that Mr R had initially told Monzo he thought he might have authorised the first payment but that the later payments were unauthorised. He also told Monzo he'd been the victim of a scam but couldn't provide any details of what had happened. Based on what Mr R had told us, she considered the transactions were more likely than not authorised. So, she didn't think Monzo had treated Mr R unfairly by refusing to refund them.

Mr R didn't accept the Investigator's findings. He said he did not authorise any of the payments, they were out of character and the only genuine payments he made on the evening in question were for food and drinks.

As Mr R didn't agree, the complaint's been passed to me to decide.

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 think it's important to explain I've considered all of the information provided by both parties in reaching my decision. If I've not reflected or answered something that's been said it's not because I didn't see it, it's because I didn't deem it relevant to the crux of the complaint. This isn't intended as a discourtesy to either party, but merely to reflect my informal role in deciding what a fair and reasonable outcome is.

Under the Payment Services Regulations 2017 ("PSRs"), generally, Monzo can hold Mr R responsible for transactions he made or authorised.

Monzo has provided evidence the disputed transactions were faster payments which can only be made via the Monzo app. Monzo's evidence shows the device Mr R usually uses was logged into the app at the same time as the payments were being made.

Mr R says his device has never been lost or stolen, and no one else has access to it. And,

while he understands the transactions were made from his registered device and IP address, he doesn't think this rules out unauthorised access or manipulation. But Mr R hasn't provided an explanation for how he thinks someone else could have accessed his phone and Monzo app. Mr R has told us his phone and Monzo app are both secured by biometrics and his device has never been out of his possession. Based on what Mr R has told us, there's no plausible explanation for how the transactions could have been made without Mr R's involvement.

After the disputed transactions had taken place, Mr R's account still had a balance of about £1,200. If an unauthorised party had gained access to Mr R's Monzo account, for the purpose of stealing money from him, I'd expect to see them taking as much money as possible – rather than leaving a substantial amount in the account. And the last disputed transaction was made several hours before Mr R discovered the transactions and reported matters to Monzo.

I note that Mr R initially told Monzo he had authorised the first payment of £140 but that he thought the others had been made as part of a scam. I can see that Monzo asked Mr R several questions about the potential scam – but Mr R couldn't provide any further details of the scam he thought might have taken place. And more recently, Mr R has told our Investigator that all the transactions were unauthorised. But I've seen nothing further to suggest a scam has taken place. So, I don't think this makes a difference to the overall outcome of Mr R's complaint.

Based on everything I've seen, I'm not persuaded the transactions could have been made without Mr R's authorisation in the circumstances he's described.

Generally, financial businesses should follow their customers' instructions in relation to legitimate payments and, as I've already explained, I've found the payments were – on balance – made with Mr R's involvement. However, there are some situations in which a bank should reasonably have looked more at their customers' payments before allowing them to proceed. So, I've also considered whether Monzo should have intervened in any of these payments.

I do note that the transactions were made in quick succession – about 15-20 minutes apart. But having considered the overall pattern and value of the disputed transactions, along with Mr R's usual account activity, I don't find the disputed transactions were so unusual that they ought to have prompted Monzo to have intervened.

Overall, I'm satisfied it's more likely than not Mr R authorised these transactions, so I'm not going to require Monzo to refund them.

My final decision

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

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr R to accept or reject my decision before 6 January 2026.

Eleanor Rippengale
Ombudsman