

The complaint

Ms W complains that Revolut Ltd allowed a payment to be made when she had frozen her account and didn't provide support when she faced immediate financial hardship.

What happened

Ms W was abroad and hired a car. She has told Revolut and this service that the car was attacked and damaged. When she returned it to the hire company she was charged €560.07. Ms W disputed the charge and froze her account to prevent the money being taken. However, the sum was paid leaving her short of funds while overseas.

She contacted Revolut immediately and a chargeback was raised. Revolut told her that it would take some time to resolve and Ms W said she was experiencing financial hardship and faced being made homeless. Subsequently, she added a further point that the transaction had been unauthorised. She said that the account had been frozen by her at the time of the transaction and the money should not have been paid over.

Ms W complained immediately but this was rejected by Revolut so she brought the matter to this service. It was considered by one of our investigators who didn't believe it should be upheld. He reviewed Revolut's system records and he was satisfied the account had not been frozen at the time the payment was taken. He believed Revolut had acted appropriately in handling Ms W' request and explained that her complaint had not included the outcome of the chargeback.

Ms W did not agree and said the transaction had gone through when her account had been frozen. She also said they had been left stranded abroad without money or accommodation. Revolut had offered no practical help.

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.

When the evidence is incomplete, inconclusive or contradictory as some of it is here – I've reached my outcome on the balance of probabilities – that is, what I consider likely to have happened given the available evidence and the wider circumstances.

I want to acknowledge that I've summarised the events of the complaint. I don't intend any discourtesy by this – it just reflects the informal nature of our service. I also want to assure Ms W that I've reviewed everything on file. If I don't comment on something, it's not because I haven't considered it. It's because I've concentrated on what I think are the key issues. Our powers allow me to do this.

I should make it clear that the role of the Financial Ombudsman Service is to resolve individual complaints and to award redress where appropriate. I do not perform the role of the industry regulator and I do not have the power to make rules for financial businesses or to punish them.

I have every sympathy with Ms W, but I do not consider I can uphold her complaint. I will explain why.

I must reiterate the point made by our investigator that Ms W's complaint to Revolut was not about the outcome of the chargeback and that is now the subject of a separate complaint.

However, I think it relevant to my decision to explain the basics of the chargeback regime. Chargeback is a voluntary scheme run by the card scheme operator to process settlement disputes between the card issuer (such as Revolut) – on behalf of the cardholder (Ms W) – and the merchant (here it's the car hire company). It is not a legal right that the cardholder has.

The scheme operator sets the chargeback rules and time limits for transactions made using the card scheme. And it is the scheme operator that decides whether a chargeback is successful – the card issuer simply makes a request on the cardholder's behalf. If the card issuer knows it is out of time, or is unlikely to succeed, I wouldn't necessarily expect it to raise a chargeback.

Revolut took the information Ms W provided and made a chargeback without delay. I cannot say that it did anything materially wrong in its handling of that element of the proceedings, but I cannot comment further on its pursuit of the chargeback..

On the issue of whether the account was frozen I have reviewed the detailed records provided by Revolut. These show the instructions coming from Ms W's authorised phone at the time of the transaction. The hire company had tried to take several payments between 24 and 29 August, but these were declined as the account had insufficient funds.

Revolut has explained that: *"On the date of the transaction, the account was accessed through just one device, the Customer's usual device [xxx] (see customer devices screen below). The transaction was made in [X] for transportation as per the card payment details. The card logs show that the card became unblocked on 2025-10-06 00:27:42, and remained unblocked until 2025-10-07 14:29:29 whereas the disputed transaction occurred on 07/10/2025 12:55:09. Therefore, the card became frozen after the transaction happened."*

Having seen the underlying records I am satisfied that at the time the money was taken the account was not frozen and so it is difficult to say that it was unauthorised. I appreciate during her exchanges it was suggested that the account was unblocked at 03.47 rather than 00.27.42. However, I am satisfied that the internal records reflect what happened.

As for the issue of hardship Ms W has my sympathy, but there was little Revolut could offer. It says that it may provide a temporary credit for some chargebacks, but usually only when the chance of success is reasonable. It later turned out that this chargeback didn't succeed and so I cannot say the position it took was wrong. Also given the terms of Revolut's UK banking licence it does not offer loans or overdrafts. This means it had little or no scope to offer the funds Ms W was seeking, even on a temporary basis.

I have looked at Ms W's bank account following the disouted transaction and I see that she obtained money from others, presumably family and friends. This is in line with government advice for those finding themselves in financial difficulties while abroad.

In conclusion, I recognise the difficult situation in which Ms W found herself, but that does not mean that Revolut did anything materially wrong.

My final decision

My final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Ms W to accept or reject my decision before 3 February 2026.

Ivor Graham
Ombudsman