

The complaint

Mr S complains that Barclays Bank UK PLC trading as Barclays (Barclays) is refusing to refund him the amount he lost as the result of two scams.

Mr S is being represented by a third party. To keep things simple, I will refer to Mr S throughout my decision.

What happened

The background of this complaint is well known to all parties, so I won't repeat what happened in detail.

In summary, Mr S has explained that he has fallen victim to two separate scams.

Scam 1

In March 2024 Mr S was contacted by a company I will call "X" explaining the regulators had located Bitcoin belonging to him to the value of \$90,000 (Mr S had fallen victim to a scam previously that had resulted in a loss of around £5,000).

X would help recover the funds for Mr S and would charge a commission to do so. Remote access software was also used so X could guide Mr S through different processes.

Throughout the process of recovering the funds Mr S was introduced to several people associated with X and given multiple reasons as to why he would need to make payments via cryptocurrency to release the funds.

After making multiple payments as requested by X, Mr S realised he had fallen victim to a scam.

Scam 2

In June 2024 Mr S was contacted by a company I will call "Y" explaining that it had also located Bitcoin belonging to him. Y requested a small initial payment to establish a link to Mr S's account. Y then explained that Mr S's funds had been sent and were pending but Y also convinced Mr S to invest further stating that Bitcoin were having an event and prices were likely to increase.

While in contact with Y Mr S explained that he had funds stuck in an investment with X. Y offered to help but explained a fee of £15,000 would be payable. Mr S paid the fee via Bitcoin in July 2024.

Mr S was then advised he would have to pay multiple fees and taxes before he could receive funds promised by Y,

Mr S was required to open an account with what appeared to be a genuine cryptocurrency exchange where funds appeared to be deposited. But the exchange then also requested further payments before any funds could be released.

Mr S later found that the scammers were impersonating a well-known cryptocurrency exchange and he had not been making payments to a legitimate company.

Below is a list of payments made from Mr S's account with Barclays that are relevant to his complaint:

Payment	Date	Payee	Payment Method	Amount
1	28 March 2024	Individual 1	Transfer	£570.00
		Payward		£10.00cr
2	15 April 2024	MoonPay	Debit Card	£2,242.54
3	15 April 2024	MoonPay	Debit Card	£1,900.00
4	16 April 2024	Individual 2	Transfer	£800.00
5	25 April 2024	Paybis	Debit Card	£2,500.00
6	25 April 2024	Paybis	Debit Card	£5,000.00
7	25 April 2024	Paybis	Debit Card	£4,466.91
8	2 May 2024	Paybis	Debit Card	£5,000.00
9	2 May 2024	Paybis	Debit Card	£5,000.00
10	2 May 2024	Paybis	Debit Card	£5,000.00
11	2 May 2024	Paybis	Debit Card	£5,000.00
12	2 May 2024	Paybis	Debit Card	£3,000.00
13	2 May 2024	Paybis	Debit Card	£2,000.00
14	10 May 2024	Paybis	Debit Card	£10,000.00
15	10 May 2024	Paybis	Debit Card	£10,000.00
16	10 May 2024	Paybis	Debit Card	£8,000.00
17	14 May 2024	Paybis	Debit Card	£10,000.00
18	14 May 2024	Paybis	Debit Card	£10,000.00
19	14 May 2024	Paybis	Debit Card	£6,864.50
20	20 May 2024	BitPanda	Debit Card	£250.00
21	22 May 2024	BitPanda	Debit Card	£2,500.00
22	23 May 2024	Mr S	Transfer	£2,000.00
23	27 May 2024	Individual 3	Transfer	£2,000.00
24	28 May 2024	MoonPay	Debit Card	£2,000.00
25	28 May 2024	MoonPay	Debit Card	£2,000.00
26	28 May 2024	Individual 3	Transfer	£3,200.00
	28 May 2024	BitPanda	Credit	£2,694.90cr
27	30 May 2024	MoonPay	Debit Card	£2,200.00
28	30 May 2024	MoonPay	Debit Card	£2,000.00
29	30 May 2024	Wirex	Transfer	£2,000.00
30	31 May 2024	MoonPay	Debit Card	£4,200.00
31	2 June 2024	Mr S	Transfer	£3,000.00
32	3 June 2024	Individual 4	Transfer	£1,000.00
33	4 June 2024	Coinbase	Debit Card	£4,400.00
34	4 June 2024	Individual 3	Transfer	£2,000.00
35	4 June 2024	Individual 4	Transfer	£2,000.00
36	4 June 2024	Individual 5	Transfer	£1,000.00
	4 June 2024	Coinbase	Credit	£3,980.76cr
37	5 June 2024	Individual 5	Transfer	£1,000.00
38	5 June 2024	Individual 4	Transfer	£2,000.00
39	5 June 2024	MoonPay	Transfer	£500.00
40	6 June 2024	MoonPay	Transfer	£501.00
41	6 June 2024	MoonPay	Transfer	£2,000.00
42	6 June 2024	MoonPay	Transfer	£3,000.00
43	7 June 2024	MoonPay	Transfer	£2,000.00

44	8 June 2024	Individual 5	Transfer	£3,000.00
45	10 June 2024	MoonPay	Debit Card	£428.00
	10 June 2024	Mr S	Transfer	£5,000.00
46	10 June 2024	MoonPay	Transfer	£3,000.00
47	10 June 2024	Bitstamp	Transfer	£1,000.00
48	11 June 2024	Individual 5	Transfer	£4,000.00
49	12 June 2024	MoonPay	Transfer	£4,214.00
	12 June 2024	MoonPay	Credit	£4,214.00cr
50	14 June 2024	Mr S	Transfer	£5,000.00
51	14 June 2024	Mr S	Transfer	£5,000.00
52	17 June 2024	Mr S	Transfer	£4,000.00
53	18 June 2024	Mr S	Transfer	£5,000.00
54	19 June 2024	MoonPay	Debit Card	£100.00
55	19 June 2024	CoinBase	Debit Card	£282.00
	19 June 2024	Bitstamp	Credit	£983.64cr
56	20 June 2024	Individual 4	Transfer	£5,000.00
	20 June 2024	Coinbase	Credit	£258.85cr
57	22 June 2024	Mr S	Transfer	£990.00
58	23 June 2024	Individual 4	Transfer	£1,200.00
59	2 July 2024	Coincorner	Debit Card	£250.00
60	4 July 2024	Mr S	Transfer	£2,400.00
61	15 July 2024	Mr S	Transfer	£1,500.00
62	16 July 2024	Mr S	Transfer	£2,150.00
63	16 July 2024	Mr S	Transfer	£650.00
64	16 July 2024	Mr S	Transfer	£720.00
65	23 July 2024	Mr S	Transfer	£400.00

Our Investigator considered Mr S's complaint and didn't think it should be upheld. Mr S disagreed, so this complaint has 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.

It has not been disputed that Mr S has fallen victim to cruel scams. The evidence provided by both Mr S and Barclays sets out what happened. What is in dispute is whether Barclays should refund the money Mr S lost due to the scams.

Recovering the payments Mr S made

Mr S made payments into the scam via transfer and Debit Card. But the payments were not made to the scammer directly, instead they were made to another of Mr S's accounts held elsewhere, or to purchase cryptocurrency. As it took further steps for those funds to end up in the hands of the scammer any attempts at recovery would have no prospect of success.

Should Barclays have reasonably prevented the payments Mr S made?

It has been accepted that Mr S authorised the payments that were made from his account with Barclays, albeit on X and Y's instruction. So, the starting point here is that Mr S is responsible.

However, banks and other Payment Services Providers (PSPs) do have a duty to protect against the risk of financial loss due to fraud and/or to undertake due diligence on large

transactions to guard against money laundering.

The question here is whether Barclays should have been aware of the scams and intervened when the payments were being made. And if it had intervened, would it have been able to prevent the scams taking place.

The first payments made in relation to the scam were not so significant in value that I think Barclays should reasonably have had cause for concern. But when Mr S made payment 3 he was making a second payment the same day to a cryptocurrency exchange totalling more than £4,000. Considering the overall value of the payments being made, and the increased risk associated with cryptocurrency related payments, I think Barclays should have had concerns that Mr S could have been at risk of financial harm and it should have intervened.

I think that a proportionate intervention to payment 3 would have been for Barclays to have discussed the payment with Mr S and to have provided an appropriate warning based on the information Mr S provided.

Mr S went on to make larger payments in relation to the scam which I think should also have caused Barclays to have concerns and it should have intervened further.

I can see that Barclays did intervene when Mr S made payments in relation to the scams and calls between Mr S and Barclays took place.

On 28 March 2024 Mr S attempted to make payment 1 and a call took place. During this call Mr S explained that the reason for the payment was that he was purchasing a trailer from a friend of a friend, he had been looking to buy one for a while and had seen the trailer in person.

On 5 June 2024 Mr S attempted to make a payment for £3,000 to MoonPay, the payment was declined and then a call took place between Mr S and Barclays. Mr S confirmed that he was purchasing Bitcoin/USDT, no one was helping, he was not provided with answers to give the bank, and the cryptocurrency was going to his own wallet.

A second call took place between Mr S and Barclays later the same day when two other payments were stopped. Mr S confirmed he was buying Bitcoin from MoonPay and Binance peer to peer.

Mr S also confirmed that he was not receiving advice from anyone, no one was guiding him, he had not been asked to pay money to release funds, he had not been asked to download anything to his phone or computer, he had not been told what to say to the bank, and he was not being influenced by a third party in any way.

On 6 June 2024 a further payment to MoonPay was stopped and a conversation between Mr S and Barclays took place. The call was brief and Mr S confirmed he was making the payment himself to an account in his own name.

A second call took place the same day when Mr S made payment 42. Mr S said he had been using MoonPay for a long time and buying cryptocurrency since 2018. No one had been in contact with Mr S recently asking him to make the payments.

On 7 June 2024 another payment was stopped for the value of £2,000, and another call took place between Mr S and Barclays.

Mr S confirmed he was making the payment to MoonPay, he had been into crypto since

2018, the funds would be used to buy USDT once on the MoonPay platform, no one had access to his accounts, no one had told him there was no risk or guaranteed returns, and he had not been told what to say to Barclays.

On 10 June 2024 a call took place between Barclays and Mr S when he attempted to make a payment to MoonPay. Mr S confirmed he was making a payment to his own account, no one had access to his account, he had not been added to any chats talking about cryptocurrency or investment, and he had been using the account for years.

On 11 June 2024 another call took place between Mr S and Barclays when he tried to make a payment for £1,500 to Xchainger as a peer-to-peer payment for USDT via Binance.

Mr S confirmed he was making payments via different places as Barclays kept intervening when he attempted to make cryptocurrency related payments. He had checked all the risks and was happy to make the payment. Mr S explained that he sends the cryptocurrency to his own wallet and he is the only one that has access to it. Mr S also confirmed he had not been told by anyone what to say to the bank.

On 12 June 2024 another call took place between Mr S and Barclays when he made a payment for £4,214 to MoonPay. Mr S confirmed he was buying USDT to invest for the future. When the USDT is purchased it would go into his wallet as an investment, no one had advised him what to say to the bank, he had not been rushed, he was not speaking to any third parties or brokers, no one had advised him there was no risk, he had not downloaded anything such as team viewer or AnyDesk, he would not be moving the crypto to any other third party platform or exchange and he had not been asked to send any money to recover any old or previous investments.

I think it's clear from the information available that Mr S gave incorrect information to Barclays when making the above payments. He was using remote access software, he was moving funds on from his own wallet, he was added to a chat with a scammer, he had been contacted by a third party who was guiding him, and he was making payments to recover an earlier investment.

In addition to the above Mr S also made payments related to the scams from accounts held elsewhere. When those account providers intervened Mr S also provided inaccurate answers.

Providing incorrect information would and did make it very difficult for Barclays to uncover the scams that were taking place. Even if I was to say that Barclays should have intervened further than it did, I don't have enough to say with any confidence that Mr S would have provided any more honest responses.

With the above in mind, I don't think Barclays missed an opportunity to prevent the scam from taking place and it is not responsible for Mr S's loss.

Mr S has told us he was vulnerable at the time the payments were made but it is my understanding that Barclays was not made aware of any vulnerabilities that could have affected Mr S's ability to make sound decisions. So, I can't reasonably have expected Barclays to have taken any vulnerabilities into account when the payments were made.

My final decision

I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr S to accept or reject my decision before 9 April 2026.

Terry Woodham
Ombudsman