

The complaint and background

Miss S complains that Lloyds Bank PLC (“Lloyds”) didn’t do enough to protect her when she fell victim to an employment scam.

Our investigator didn’t uphold the complaint. He didn’t think that Lloyds ought to have been concerned about the payments Miss S was making based on the amounts involved or the frequency of the payments. But, based on the evidence available, he also didn’t think that an intervention would have stopped Miss S from making the payments she’s now disputing. This was because when other financial providers intervened or blocked payments, Miss S provided inaccurate responses to the questions posed and used alternative methods to make the payments.

Miss S disagreed. She explained how the scammer told her exactly what to tell the banks. She also said that, given Lloyds and another financial provider had blocked payments and questioned her, it showed the payments were unusual and should have triggered deeper intervention. And that the pattern of behaviour was clearly out of character.

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.

Having taken into account longstanding regulatory expectations and requirements, and what I consider to be good industry practice, I agree Lloyds ought to have been on the look-out for the possibility of fraud and made additional checks before processing payments in some circumstances.

I have reviewed the payments Miss S made to the scam. Having considered their value and who they were made to, I’m not persuaded Lloyds ought to have found any of the payments suspicious, such that it ought to have made enquiries of Miss S before processing them.

I say this as the first three payments were for low value amounts, ranging from £80 to around £550 and were all made on different days. The next two payments were higher in value – around £1,300 and £1,500 – and brought the total spend that day to around £3,300. But, while not an insignificant sum, it wasn’t so high that I would have expected Lloyds to have intervened at this point. The payments were made to a legitimate international money transfer provider and there were no concerning factors about the payments at this point.

I note that, following these payments, Miss S tried to make a further payment on the same day to the international money transfer provider, and it was at this point that Lloyds blocked the payment. It blocked the next payment too. And this led to a call between Miss S and Lloyds. These payments were ultimately not made, and no further payments were made to the scam from her Lloyds account.

I acknowledge that Miss S has raised that, as Lloyds had blocked payments and questioned her, it demonstrates how uncharacteristic the payments were. But it was the *next* attempted payment – i.e. the sixth payment – that had triggered Lloyds’ fraud alert systems. And this

did seemingly prevent Miss S from making further payments and increasing her losses. But the key point here is that I wouldn't have expected Lloyds to have intervened *prior* to this – so I don't think it acted in error by not doing so.

As I wouldn't have expected Lloyds to have intervened before it did – after which point there were no further payments – I don't consider it relevant to detail what would likely have happened if it had. But, as the investigator has referenced this, I'll touch on this too for the sake of completeness. I note that, just as Miss S has said, she was extensively coached by the scammer and was told what to say to avoid alerting her financial providers to what was really happening. Even in the abovementioned call with Lloyds, Miss S seemingly provided a cover story whereby she needed to send funds to a colleague abroad. So this does suggest that Miss S's intention was to mislead Lloyds, under the guidance of the scammer, which would have played a part in preventing it from providing her with relevant warnings.

Miss S has undoubtedly been the victim of a cruel and manipulative scam. I'm sorry to learn how much she lost as a result, and I acknowledge the lasting impact to her of this. But to uphold this complaint, I'd need to be persuaded that there were failings on Lloyds' part which led to her losses. And, for the reasons given, I don't think Lloyds acted in error by its actions (or inactions) in this case. I appreciate Miss S was coached extensively by the scammer. But I can't reasonably expect Lloyds to have uncovered this when there weren't enough concerns about the payments being made to require an intervention at the time of the disputed payments.

My final decision

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

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss S to accept or reject my decision before 20 March 2026.

Melanie van der Waals
Ombudsman