

## **The complaint**

Miss M complains that Barclays Bank UK PLC (Barclays) didn't do enough to protect her when she fell victim to a scam.

Miss M is represented in this matter, but for ease of reading I will refer to Miss M throughout this decision.

## **What happened**

Miss M says that an acquaintance on social media introduced her to an investment opportunity that could yield huge returns. Miss M says she spoke to representatives from the business and decided to invest. Miss M sent four payments from her Barclays account to her cryptocurrency wallet in July to August 2021. The total value of the payments Miss M made from her Barclays account to her cryptocurrency wallet during this period was £12,500. Miss M says this money was then transferred on to the scammers. Miss M told this service she had never bought cryptocurrency before.

Miss M says she carried out her own due diligence by researching the provider on-line and did not find any negative information. Miss M says the investment platform she had been using disappeared and having investigated further, she realised she had fallen victim to a scam.

Miss M has not been able to provide this service with any records relating to the investment she made or any records of the conversations she had with the scammers.

In August 2025, Miss M complained to Barclays. She said it should have intervened before she made the third payment to the cryptocurrency provider for £3,000 on 10 August 2021. She said it was likely the scam could have been uncovered at this point if Barclays had made an appropriate intervention.

Barclays did not uphold Miss M's complaint.

Unhappy with Barclays' response, Miss M referred her complaint to this service.

An investigator looked into the complaint and didn't uphold it. They said they had not been provided with anything to show that Miss M had been the victim of a scam, for example details of the scam, or evidence she had lost money.

Miss M did not accept our investigator's view and the complaint has been passed to me for a final decision.

Having reviewed the evidence provided I asked Miss M to explain why the records she had provided showed that she had been engaging in cryptocurrency trading activity well before the reported scam period. I noted she had previously told this service she had never bought cryptocurrency before. I noted there was a pattern of Miss M transferring money into her cryptocurrency account and then sending funds onto a third party from as early as 22 January 2021.

I asked Miss M to explain who she was transferring the cryptocurrency funds to when she sent funds between 22 January 2021 and 29 June 2021. And I noted Miss M had received a credit of 3972.346 USDT (approx. £2,980 GBP) into her cryptocurrency account on 17 December 2021. I asked Miss M to confirm who this payment came from and what it was for.

Unfortunately, Miss M said she was unable to recall what these payments and the receipt were for but said she believed '*...this activity was independent in nature and related to personal arrangements she had with a friend at the time*'. Miss M said she '*...did not have prior experience with cryptocurrency, and this individual would often recommend certain currencies to trade. Similarly, the credit referenced is believed to have originated from this same individual.*'

### **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's important to see evidence that a customer has been scammed and that, for example, it isn't a case of a failed investment. In this case Miss M has told this service she has been the victim of an investment scam but hasn't been able to evidence the scam or how it unfolded. For example, she has not been able to provide any evidence of the conversations she had with the people she alleges scammed her, evidence of the investments she made, or anything to show she has lost money.

I appreciate that Miss M has provided evidence to show that she was invited to a webinar by the scammers, but it appears this was several months after she says she lost her money in this scam and I cannot reasonably find that this webinar invitation is evidence that Miss M lost money to a scam. Likewise, Miss M has provided copies of emails dated between early 2022 and January 2023. These emails appear to relate to purchase of a membership with the scammers by Miss M. It is not clear to me how these emails are related to the money Miss M says she sent to the scammers in July and August 2021.

As our investigator noted even if there was evidence to show that Miss M had lost her money to a scam, her bank account records show that she had been making transfers to her cryptocurrency account for a number of months before she says she fell victim to a scam. In light of this, I don't think that the payments Miss M made on 6 July for £1,000 and for £1,500 on 7 July 2021, would have looked out of character for the way Miss M operated her account. Likewise, the payment for £3,000 on 10 August 2021 would not have looked out-of-line with her previous pattern of transfers to her cryptocurrency account. I therefore don't think Barclays acted incorrectly when it processed these payments in-line with Miss M's instructions.

I note that Barclays spoke to Miss M about the second transfer she made on 10 August 2021 for £7,000 before it was processed. In the call Miss M confirmed the payment was genuine. Barclays has provided a recording of this conversation to this service. In the call Miss M told Barclays she was sending money to her own cryptocurrency account and that she had made 'loads' of transfers to this account 'in the past'. Given that Miss M had a history of making payments to this account and confirmed that she had not been pressured by anyone to make the payments I don't think Barclays could reasonably have been expected to do more.

I am also mindful that from the cryptocurrency account statement Miss M has provided, it does not appear that all the money she says she lost to the scammers was transferred on from her cryptocurrency account to a third party. It appears a significant balance remained in her cryptocurrency account.

I appreciate that Miss M says the funds she received into her cryptocurrency account in December 2021, around £2,980, were not in any way related to the scam, but without further evidence I cannot safely find this is correct.

It is not in dispute that Miss M made the payments to her cryptocurrency account, but I don't think this is enough to show that she has lost money to a scam. This is not to say I don't believe Miss M, but I do think it's reasonable for her to provide some evidence to support her version of events about the circumstances of the scam. In the absence of that evidence to show that Miss M lost this money in a scam I can't say that it would be reasonable for Barclays to be held liable for any of the losses Miss M says she has suffered.

I'm sorry to hear of what's happened to Miss M and I understand why she feels the money should be refunded, but without evidence that a scam took place I can't consider Barclays' actions with regard to the payments she made towards the investment.

### **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 Miss M to accept or reject my decision before 16 March 2026.

Suzannah Stuart  
**Ombudsman**