

The complaint

Ms E complains that Revolut Ltd won't refund money she lost when she was a victim of a scam.

What happened

Ms E fell victim to a job scam in 2025. As part of the scam, Ms E was told that she had to pay various fees. And she did this by purchasing crypto, with Revolut and another legitimate crypto provider, and forwarding it on to the scam. Ms E made five crypto transactions to the scam using her Revolut account across several days totalling about £2,300. She also made a couple of transfers to her own account totalling about £100.

Ms E realised she'd been scammed when she kept on being asked by the scammer for more funds. Ms E notified Revolut of what happened and raised a complaint. Revolut rejected it and explained that they wouldn't refund her.

The complaint was referred to the Financial Ombudsman. Our Investigator didn't think Revolut was responsible for Ms E's loss. He said Revolut carried out additional checks before processing some of the payments, but they didn't uncover the scam as Ms E provided inaccurate responses to their questioning. Our Investigator also didn't think Revolut could've recovered Ms E's losses.

Ms E disagreed, and so the matter 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.

I'm sorry Ms E has been the victim of a scam. I appreciate this is a lot of money to Ms E and so I don't underestimate the impact this matter has had. I therefore understand why Ms E is doing everything she can to try and recover it. But I must consider if Revolut are responsible for Ms E's loss. At which point, I should explain that while there are certain obligations on Electronic Money Institutions (EMIs) to protect consumers and prevent losses to scams in certain circumstances, these are not absolute. And so, there are unfortunately occasions where a consumer will lose out but have no recourse to a refund. Having carefully considered what happened here, and while I know this won't be the outcome Ms E is hoping for, I don't think Revolut is responsible for Ms E's loss. I therefore don't think Revolut have acted unfairly by not refunding the payments. I'll explain why.

These payments aren't covered by the Payment Systems Regulator's mandatory reimbursement scheme – as it doesn't include crypto withdrawals or payments made to an account held in a person's own name. I've therefore considered whether Revolut should reimburse Ms E under any of their other obligations.

It isn't disputed that Ms E authorised the payments from her Revolut account. Generally, consumers are liable for payments they authorise and Revolut are also expected to process

authorised payment instructions without undue delay. However, taking into account the regulatory rules and guidance, relevant codes of practice and good industry practice, including the Consumer Duty, there are circumstances where it might be appropriate for Revolut to take additional steps or make additional checks before processing a payment to help protect customers from the possibility of financial harm from fraud.

I've considered whether the payment instructions given by Ms E to Revolut (either individually or collectively) were unusual enough to have expected additional checks to be carried out before they were processed. When considering this, I've kept in mind that EMIs process high volumes of transactions each day. And that there is a balance for Revolut to find between allowing customers to be able to use their account and questioning transactions to confirm they're legitimate.

At which point, I should explain that for me to find it fair and reasonable that Revolut should refund Ms E requires more than a finding that Revolut ought to have intervened. I would need to find not only that Revolut failed to intervene where they ought reasonably to have done so - but crucially I'd need to find that but for this failure the subsequent loss would've been avoided. That latter element concerns causation. A proportionate intervention will not always result in the prevention of a payment. And if I find it more likely than not that such a proportionate intervention by Revolut wouldn't have revealed the payments were part of a fraud or scam, then I couldn't fairly hold Revolut liable for not having prevented them from being made.

Here, Revolut have shown that they carried out additional checks before processing three of the transactions – the single crypto withdrawal, the first transfer to Ms E's own account and the first payment to the crypto provider. I think this was reasonable in the circumstances. I've therefore thought about whether their checks were proportionate to the risk associated with the payments. Having done so, I think they were.

Before processing the fund transfer to Ms E's own account, Revolut warned:

“Do you know and trust this payee?”

“If you're unsure, don't pay them, as we may not be able to help you get your money back. Remember, fraudsters can impersonate others, and we will never ask you to make a payment.”

And before processing the crypto withdrawal, Revolut provided a similar warning – albeit saying they wouldn't be able to get the crypto back. And they highlighted the non-reversible nature of crypto once it is transferred, along with the risk of loss if the funds were sent to the wrong address.

Given the low value of these payments (£15 and £95.06 respectively), I think these warnings were proportionate to the associated risk. As I've said, there is a balance for Revolut between questioning transactions and not unduly delaying payments. And here, ultimately, I don't think there was a heightened risk of financial harm to Ms E that warranted a greater level of intervention.

Revolut did however carry out a more in-depth intervention before processing the payment to the crypto provider. As part of this, Revolut told Ms E that something didn't look right and that they'd identified the transaction as a potential scam. They then told her to answer their questions honestly, and that if she was being pressured to hide any details about the payment then she could be being scammed. Ms E acknowledged this warning, confirming that she understood she might not get her money back if she didn't answer honestly and it turned out to be a scam.

Ms E also confirmed that she was completing the transaction by herself. This was despite Revolut warning that if anyone was telling her what to say then it may be a scam. And when asked why she was making the transaction, Ms E didn't select 'As part of a job opportunity'. Instead, she selected 'Pay a family member or friend' followed by, when asked what she was paying them for, 'Paying money I owe'. Ms E then confirmed this person hadn't asked for help urgently or unexpectedly, she hadn't paid this person before, and she'd obtained the payment details 'face to face'. Revolut then provided further warnings to Ms E, but these were mostly tailored to impersonation scams – and so weren't particularly relevant to her situation.

I think Revolut took reasonable steps to understand the surrounding circumstances of the payment to establish if Ms E was at risk of financial harm. Unfortunately, due to Ms E not providing accurate information, Revolut were prevented from this. I appreciate Ms E was manipulated by the scammer and told how to respond to Revolut's questions to ensure the payment was processed. While I sympathise with Ms E, I can't fairly hold Revolut responsible for that. They were reliant on Ms E providing accurate information and engaging positively with their fraud prevention checks. And based on Ms E's responses, I don't think they would've had enough reason to suspect the payment to the crypto provider was being made for anything other than legitimate purposes. So, I think it was reasonable for Revolut to process the payment upon receiving Ms E's instruction that she wished to proceed.

Ms E has explained that her vulnerability at the time is central to how she was manipulated by the scammer – as they directly contributed to why she followed their instructions by clicking through the warnings Revolut provided and responding quickly under pressure. And that she wasn't in a calm, rational or fully informed state at the time (which is common in victims of grooming-style scams).

I don't doubt what Ms E has said as, sadly, scammers do take advantage of their victims' vulnerabilities. As I've said, I sympathise with Ms E greatly. And I want to make it clear that I'm not trying to place any blame on her for what happened. But as a consequence of her trusting the scammer and following their instructions, Revolut weren't able to uncover the scam and protect Ms E from financial harm. And although Revolut ought to take reasonable steps to detect vulnerabilities (to protect their customers), in these circumstances, and based on Ms E's responses to their questioning, I don't think Revolut ought reasonably to have been able to establish any underlying vulnerability.

I've thought about whether Revolut should've intervened before processing any of the subsequent payments. But these payments were of a similarly low value and, in my view, didn't present a payment pattern commonly indicative of fraud. And given Revolut had already been reassured by Ms E when they questioned the first payment sent to this crypto provider, I don't think Revolut would've had enough reason to suspect Ms E was potentially falling victim to a scam. So, I wouldn't reasonably have expected them to have carried out additional checks before processing the later payments. But even if they did, I don't think it would've made a difference. I think it's most likely Ms E would've similarly followed the scammer's instructions and provided responses that hid the true circumstances of the payments – thereby reassuring Revolut again that they were being made for legitimate purposes. It follows that I don't think Revolut could reasonably have prevented Ms E's loss by way of a proportionate intervention.

I've also considered whether, on being alerted to the scam, Revolut could have done anything to recover Ms E's losses, but I don't think they could. Revolut had no method of recovery for the crypto withdrawal. And in respect of the payments to the crypto provider, these funds had already been forwarded on to the scam. So, there wouldn't have been any funds remaining. And even if there had been, they would've been accessible to Ms E (as were the funds transferred to Ms E's own account).

I know Ms E will be disappointed by this outcome and that she has questioned the fairness of the situation – as she is suffering the full weight of the loss when she was clearly exploited and is left in a position without any consumer protection or available remedy. I realise she is the innocent victim of a scam whereby she was exploited by the scammer. But it would only be fair for me to direct Revolut to refund her loss if I thought they were responsible – and I'm not persuaded that this was the case. For the above reasons, I think Revolut has acted fairly and so I'm not going to tell them to do anything further.

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 E to accept or reject my decision before 6 March 2026.

Daniel O'Dell
Ombudsman