

The complaint

Miss M complains that MONZO BANK LIMITED (“Monzo”) did not reimburse the £2,000 she says she lost to a scam.

What happened

Miss M says she signed up to an aesthetics course that she found advertised online by an individual I will refer to as ‘B’. She sent B £2,000 from her Monzo account on 12 June 2025, followed by a further £400 from a separate account she held with another provider. Miss M says she did not receive any of the course and has since found out that B was not accredited so could not have provided her with a certificate at the end of the course. Miss M asked B for a refund, but says she didn’t hear back from her again.

Miss M raised a scam claim with both Monzo and her other account provider. She received a £400 refund from the other bank, but Monzo explained they felt this was a civil dispute between her and B, so they did not agree to reimburse the £2,000.

Miss M was unhappy with the response so referred the complaint to our service. Our Investigator looked into it and explained that, based on what they had seen, they thought it was fair that Monzo had treated this as a civil dispute. So, they did not agree that Monzo needed to reimburse the £2,000.

Miss M did not agree with the Investigator’s response. She reiterated that the agreed service was now provided, as the agreement was for a completed aesthetics course with a certification. As this was not delivered, she asked for a full refund.

As an informal agreement could not be reached, the complaint has been passed to me for a final decision.

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 thought very carefully about Monzo’s actions, I agree with the findings set out by our Investigator. I do appreciate how disappointing this will be for Miss M but, whilst I’m sorry to hear of what’s happened, I don’t think I can fairly hold Monzo liable for her loss.

When considering what is fair and reasonable in this case, I’ve thought about the relevant rules that were in place at the time this disputed payment was made. From 7 October 2024, Payment Services Providers in the UK, like Monzo, have been bound by the Faster Payments Scheme (FPS) and the CHAPS reimbursement rules. Under these rules, most victims of Authorised Push Payment (APP) scams should be reimbursed – but “private civil disputes” are not covered.

I’ve therefore considered whether what has happened between Miss M and B meets the reimbursement rules’ definition of an APP scam or could more reasonably be classed as a civil dispute. The rules define an APP Scam as:

“Where a person uses a fraudulent or dishonest act or course of conduct to manipulate, deceive or persuade a consumer into transferring funds from the consumer’s relevant account to a relevant account not controlled by the consumer, where:

- *The recipient is not who the consumer intended to pay, or*
- *The payment is not for the purpose the consumer intended”*

By contrast, a private civil dispute is defined as a *“dispute between a consumer and payee which is a private matter between them for resolution in the civil courts, rather than involving criminal fraud or dishonesty”*.

So, in order to consider what has happened here as an APP scam, I would need to be satisfied that it involves criminal deception. The evidence for this would therefore need to be convincing.

Miss M has told us that she did not receive the training course she had paid for, and she had not completed any of the modules. She also said that B did not have the appropriate accreditation to provide the training so could not give Miss M the certificate she had been promised.

As part of my assessment, I have reviewed the communications provided between Miss M and B. Miss M has provided our service with some screenshots of conversations, as well as a document showing the Whatsapp messages, and Monzo has also sent us the communications Miss M sent to their claim team.

Unfortunately, these communications are not complete, as the screen shots are relatively sporadic and do not show the conversations in their entirety. Also, the document of Whatsapp messages that Miss M has provided is not complete as some of the messages that appear on the screenshots do not appear on the document. For example, the screenshots for the Whatsapp conversation on 2 and 3 October 2025 shows B saying *‘Our first is 10:30’* and *‘Hey babe can you send me the money across when you get a sec please’*. However, these do not appear in the document of Whatsapp messages. Because of the missing messages, it is difficult to safely rely on this document as an accurate reflection of the full conversation between Miss M and B.

In the messages I do have, I can see that some of them suggest Miss M did receive some of the training course she paid for. These say:

- *You free to finish the course’* from B to Miss M
- *I’ve gone through the manuals’* from Miss M to B
- *I can do online today’* from Miss M to B
- *We had just started dermaplaning and micro needling’* from Miss M to B

As I mentioned, these suggest that the training course was started, and that Miss M received training materials which she has referred to as ‘manuals’. The messages were sent over a five-month period, though there are messages between Miss M and B from as far back as January 2023. It therefore appears that Miss M was receiving training from B over the course of at least a few months. I also think it is unlikely that Miss M would have waited five months to raise a scam claim if she had received nothing during that time period.

Miss M has told our service and Monzo that B was not accredited to provide the training course and that she could not have issued a relevant certificate at the end of the course. But I note that we have not received any evidence from Miss M to support this. I have not seen the original advert for the aesthetic course and have only seen the price list for the courses

offered. I therefore do not know exactly what was agreed between Miss M and B or what Miss M's understanding of the course was in terms of what accreditation she thought she would gain. It also isn't clear exactly what led to Miss M requesting a refund, but I can see that B eventually chose to close the business premises she had been using.

In summary, the conversations I have seen between Miss M and B suggest that the course was at the very least started and that Miss M did receive manuals in relation to this. So, I do think some of the service she had paid for was provided. From what I have seen, at that time B was a practising beautician, with a physical studio and a registered company at that time. Nothing I have seen suggests there was criminal fraud or dishonestly involved and I am therefore satisfied that Monzo acted reasonably when it treated this as a civil dispute.

I appreciate that Miss M's other bank account provider reimbursed the £400 she sent to B from that account. However, as this complaint is against Monzo I can only consider their actions within this decision. And having done so, I don't think they are required to reimburse Miss M with the remaining £2,000.

My final decision

I do not uphold Miss M's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss M to accept or reject my decision before 25 May 2026.

Rebecca Norris

Ombudsman