

The complaint

Mr H complains that Lloyds Bank PLC didn't take adequate steps to protect him from an investment scam. He said he lost over £100,000 to the scam. He wants the money he lost refunded along with 8% interest.

Mr H is represented by a third party but for ease of reference I have referred to Mr H throughout this decision.

What happened

In December 2024, Mr H saw an advertisement for a cryptocurrency investment on a social media platform which was endorsed by a well-known celebrity. He submitted his details and was then called back by someone who sounded knowledgeable about cryptocurrency. Mr H was guided on how to provide remote access to his computer and set up accounts for the investment payments. He made an initial payment of £250 and then invested £10,000. He was told there were great opportunities to make money and he made further investments. Mr H said it wasn't until he tried to withdraw his money that he realised he had fallen victim to a scam.

Mr H believes that Lloyds Bank should have done more to protect him. While he said he was contacted about payments, he said the interventions weren't sufficient and had they been then the scam would have been identified and his losses prevented. He referred his complaint to this service.

Our investigator said that they hadn't been provided with sufficient evidence to show that Mr H had lost money to a scam. They noted that Mr H had made payments to a cryptocurrency account in his name which he controlled. They said these transactions weren't fraudulent and there wasn't evidence that the money had been lost to the scam.

Lloyds Bank issued a final response to Mr H's complaint dated 15 January 2026. It noted that Mr H made 13 cryptocurrency payments between 22 January 2025 and 6 May 2025 totalling £114,055. Lloyds Bank said that it intervened on several occasions, stopping his first five payments and providing education on the risks of cryptocurrency scams. However, Mr H said he was investing with a long-term friend. His testimony remained consistent and there was no clear evidence of third-party involvement. It said that based on the evidence it had it couldn't conclusively determine that a scam had occurred.

Lloyds Bank provided evidence of the interventions it made.

Mr H provided further information in response to our investigator's view, and a further view was issued. Our investigator noted the comment about Mr H's age, and vulnerability given he isn't computer-savvy and said this had been considered. However, they also took into account that Mr H had been able to carry out the steps needed to move, transfer and authorise the funds. They noted the comment that Mr H hadn't been able to get the requested cryptocurrency statements to show the loss of funds but said that without these it wasn't possible to show that the assets were no longer in Mr H's possession or to confirm the level of any loss.

Our investigator further noted that Lloyds Bank had provided evidence of the interventions it made in Mr H's payments. This included asking several questions about the payments to understand the risk and said that Mr H was provided with education about scams. Our investigator thought that Lloyds Bank identified key suspicious indicators and appropriately challenged these. Given this, they said that even if evidence of a scam was provided, they thought that Lloyds Bank had taken reasonable actions in response to the payment risks and didn't think that any further intervention would have prevented Mr H from making the payments.

As a resolution wasn't agreed, this complaint was passed to me, an ombudsman, to issue a decision.

My provisional conclusions

I issued a provisional decision on this complaint. While I came to the same outcome to that set out in our investigator's view, I included additional reasoning for my decision. The details of my provisional decision are set out below.

Lloyds Bank identified the following payments made by Mr H between January 2025 and May 2025 to buy cryptocurrency.

<i>Payment</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Amount</i>	<i>Type</i>
1	22 January 2025	£10,000	Transfer
2	28 January 2025	£10,000	Transfer
3	17 February 2025	£7,255	Transfer
4	18 February 2025	£2,300	Transfer
5	27 February 2025	£8,000	Transfer
6	6 March 2025	£5,000	Transfer
7	21 March 2025	£17,000	Transfer
8	24 March 2025	£21,800	Transfer
9	25 March 2025	£10,200	Transfer
10	26 March 2025	£4,000	Transfer
11	14 April 2025	£4,600	Transfer
12	28 April 2025	£7,000	Transfer
13	6 May 2025	£6,900	Transfer

Mr H authorised the payments and under the Payment Service Regulations 2017, the starting point is that he is liable for the payments he authorised. However, Lloyds Bank should have systems in place to look out for out of character or unusual transactions, or other signs that might indicate that its customers are at risk of fraud. But those are

predicated on there having been a loss suffered to a fraud or scam. So, to start, I've considered whether Mr H has suffered a loss as a result of falling victim to a scam.

Mr H has submitted documents in support of his claim – including correspondence with the alleged scammer and evidence of payments for cryptocurrency. Mr H confirmed that the payments he made were to a cryptocurrency account in his own name and he confirmed he controlled this. I haven't received copies of statements evidencing the payments out of his cryptocurrency account which means I haven't seen clear evidence of any loss. I note the comments Mr H has made about not being tech-savvy and struggling to access the evidence requested, but I also note he was able to make the original transactions and is represented by a third party that could assist.

While I haven't seen clear evidence of the losses, Mr H has provided the communication with the alleged scammer which shows the contact stopping after he tried to withdraw his money and this, along with Mr H's testimony, does suggest that he was the victim of a scam. Lloyds Bank has provided evidence of the actions it took in regard to Mr H's payments and so, while I cannot say for certain the extent of any losses to the scam, I have considered the evidence provided to see if the actions Lloyds Bank took were reasonable.

Mr H was a Lloyds Bank customer before these payments were made and so Lloyds Bank had access to his account history to be able to identify whether the payments were unusual or out of character. In the months leading up to the disputed payments, Mr H used his account for general spending. His payments tended to be low value, aside from two £10,000 payments in December 2024 labelled 'classic car'. Given the size of the transactions Mr H made in January 2025, and noting these were for cryptocurrency, I think these should have been identified as unusual and out of character and warranted intervention.

Lloyds Bank has provided evidence that it intervened in several of Mr H's payments. I have listened to the calls and seen the transcripts of the calls that took place between Lloyds Bank and Mr H before the first five payments were made. On these calls, the risk of scams was clearly raised, with the advisers saying on more than one occasion that they believed Mr H may have been the victim of a scam. Clear warnings were given about the risks associated with cryptocurrency and suggestions made for Mr H to try to withdraw funds to check he was able to do this as well as to carry out more research into the investment. Despite these warnings, Mr H made it clear he wanted to go ahead with the transactions. He said that he set up the cryptocurrency account with the help of a friend but that only he had control of the account and that the cryptocurrency he bought had remained in his account.

Having considered the intervention that took place in regard to the first five payments, I find this was proportionate. Mr H's actions and responses to the advisers' questions did at times raise concerns and further challenges to his answers were made. The risk of scams was clearly stated, and Mr H was given advice on how to protect himself, where to find more information and what to look out for. Mr H made it clear he was aware of the risks and that he could afford to lose the money. Given his responses to the challenges made and his determination to make the payments, I do not find I can say that Lloyds Bank was wrong to allow the payments to be made.

Lloyds Bank didn't intervene after the fifth payment. By this time, Mr H had a history of investing in cryptocurrency and had been provided with the warnings and advice we would expect in regard to the earlier payments. There were gaps between payments six, seven and eight being made which doesn't suggest he was being pressured to make the payments. That said, noting the size of the payments being made and that Mr H started to make payments in close succession, I think further intervention at payment nine would have been reasonable. However, having looked at the messages from when payment nine was made, I do not think any further intervention would have changed the outcome. I say this because

Mr H didn't appear concerned by his investment at this stage and given the questions he had previously been asked by Lloyds Bank and the responses he had given, I do not have anything to show that further intervention would have prevented Mr H making the additional payments.

In conclusion, while Mr H's testimony and the messages provided support his claim that he was a victim of fraud, I haven't seen clear evidence to show the money he lost. However, even if I accept that Mr H lost money to a scam, having considered the actions Lloyds Bank took in regard to the early payments, I find these reasonable. The intervention didn't prevent Mr H from making the payments, and while I think a further intervention would have been proportionate, I do not find I can say that this would have likely changed the outcome in this complaint. Therefore, while I know this will be disappointing for Mr H, I do not find I can uphold this complaint.

Mr H didn't accept my provisional decision. He explained that he was an elderly customer who had been manipulated into losing his life savings. He said that he had experienced problems downloading his cryptocurrency statements but that the other evidence provided showed he had lost his money to a scam. He said that the intervention made by Lloyds Bank wasn't sufficient and noted that the Consumer Duty regulation made it clear that banks need to avoid foreseeable harm to their customers. He believed that his payments were typical of a scam and that Lloyds Bank shouldn't have allowed him to proceed with the payments without more detailed questioning and thorough, detailed scam education and warnings.

Mr H commented on the calls made by Lloyds Bank saying the questioning wasn't clear and wasn't conducive to uncovering the scam. He didn't think the Lloyds Bank advisers' questions were sufficient to break the spell of the fraudster and even when the adviser said they thought Mr H had been a victim of a scam the payments was still allowed to proceed.

Regarding further intervention at payment nine, Mr H didn't accept that this wouldn't have changed the outcome. He said that had Lloyds Bank asked sufficiently probing questions further losses could have been prevented. He said that Lloyds Bank missed opportunities to uncover the scam. He noted the size of the payments being made and thought that further interventions should have happened, including Lloyds Bank enacting its fraud protocol.

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 have considered the comments made in response to my provisional decision, however these haven't changed my position on this complaint.

I do not underestimate the upset that Mr H has been caused and the financial and emotional impact this has had. I note the comment about Mr H's age and vulnerability, and I have taken this into account. As I noted in my provisional decision, while I haven't seen statements showing the extent of the losses, the other evidence provided does support Mr H's claim that he was the victim of a scam. Given this I considered the actions taken by Lloyds Bank to assess whether I thought these were reasonable.

I note the comment made about the questioning on the intervention calls but, as I previously noted, I think the advisers did challenge the payments Mr H was making and when his answers weren't clear they asked further questions. Mr H was provided with warnings about scams and the advisers noted they were concerned about his payments, but he was determined to go ahead. So, while I note the comments made, I think the interventions were reasonable.

I understand that Mr H believes further interventions should have happened. I agree that a further call would have been proportionate at payment nine. I appreciate that Mr H has said that had this happened in a sufficiently probing way further losses could have been stopped. I cannot say for certain what would have happened had further intervention happened at this stage but based on the evidence I have seen, including the interactions between Mr H and the scammer and noting the previous interventions that had occurred, I do not find I can say that a further intervention would have changed the outcome.

So, for the reasons I set out in my provisional decision, and those noted above, my conclusions haven't changed and I do not uphold this complaint.

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 Mr H to accept or reject my decision before 19 May 2026.

Jane Archer
Ombudsman