

## complaint

Ms L complains that MoneyGram International Limited (MoneyGram) released a money transfer intended for her, to an unknown third party.

## background

Ms L's mother sent £700 to her through MoneyGram. When Ms L went to collect the transfer, she was told the funds had already been taken.

Ms L complained, saying she wanted MoneyGram to pay her the money she'd lost out on. MoneyGram issued its final response to Ms L's complaint on 1 February 2019. It said it released the money to someone who identified themselves as Ms L. The recipient provided the transaction's unique reference, along with photographic identification and confirmed the correct names of the sender and receiver.

It said it was contractually obliged to release the funds on receipt of the above, and that it couldn't uphold Ms L's complaint, given it had followed the correct steps.

Our investigator didn't agree. He said the date of birth, phone number and address given by the recipient didn't match the details for Ms L. So he thought MoneyGram hadn't carried out satisfactory checks, and said it should refund Ms L.

MoneyGram didn't agree, so it asked for an ombudsman to review the matter afresh.

On 16 June 2021, I issued a provisional decision. In it, I said:

*"When Ms L's mother arranged for MoneyGram to send £700 to Ms L, she completed MoneyGram's standard form that included various details for herself, but limited details for Ms L: i.e. only her full name. Ms L's mother was given a unique transaction reference number (UTRN), which is the code required to enable the recipient to collect the funds.*

*In order to collect funds, the recipient had to present the UTRN as well as photographic identification confirming their name. The receiver's form completed in relation to this transaction included the correct UTRN, sender's name and Ms L's full name. It also included an address, phone number, date of birth and place of birth that differs to the information Ms L has given our service. So, on the face of it, it appears that Ms L didn't in fact collect the money intended for her.*

*However, MoneyGram didn't have Ms L's correct address, phone number, date of birth or place of birth. The only details it had for her was her full name. So, it wasn't able to check whether or not the details presented by the person who collected the money matched those of the sender's intended recipient.*

*Moneygram says the receiver presented a Passport that matched its identification requirements. It didn't retain a copy of the Passport (it's not its policy to do so), so I can't say if the ID matched presented matched Ms L's name.*

*But what I can say is that the information I've seen that was provided to MoneyGram matched the information it had on file, including the UTRN which was only known to MoneyGram, Ms L and her mother. It appears then that the collection details were compromised or intercepted somewhere along the way. But I haven't seen any evidence as*

*to how that might've happened, so I've based my decision on whether or not MoneyGram took reasonable care to release the funds to the correct person.*

*I accept Ms L didn't collect the money, and that the collecting party gave the wrong address for Ms L. But given MoneyGram didn't have Ms L's address, date of birth or any further details, it couldn't have known it wasn't giving the money to the correct person.*

*MoneyGram followed its procedures, which included checking a Passport and requesting details that should have only been known to the parties involved in the transaction. Because of that, I'm satisfied it took reasonable care to ensure the money was given to the correct person.*

*Ms L appears to be the victim of a scam. Although in saying that, I haven't seen anything to demonstrate how the necessary details were compromised and, for the reasons I've set out above, I don't consider I can reasonably hold MoneyGram responsible for her loss, given that it followed its procedures, and took reasonable steps to identify the recipient."*

I asked Ms L and MoneyGram to provide any further submissions or evidence by 30 June 2021. MoneyGram responded saying it had nothing to add and Ms L didn't respond.

### **my findings**

I've considered all the available evidence and arguments to decide what's fair and reasonable in the circumstances of this complaint.

As neither Ms L, nor MoneyGram made any further representations or offered any further evidence, my findings about this complaint haven't changed. It follows that I don't uphold Ms L's 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 Ms L to accept or reject my decision before 28 October 2021.

Alex Brooke-Smith  
**Ombudsman**