

The complaint

Miss O complains that her chargeback dispute raised with Revolut Ltd took too long, and that she was given conflicting and unhelpful information.

What happened

In October 2022 Miss O made a payment of nearly £700 to a third party ("the merchant"), using her Revolut debit card. She later cancelled her order, and was entitled to a refund. When this did not arrive when she expected, she asked Revolut to raise a chargeback dispute for her in early November. She says that three days later, the merchant told her that it had accepted the chargeback claim and refunded her money (and she provided a screenshot to support her case). But Revolut did not pay her the refund until late December, almost seven weeks after the dispute was first opened. She says this caused her financial difficulty as she was unable to pay some bills in the meantime. She accused Revolut of holding on to her money and delaying payment.

Revolut told her that it had not received a response or any refund from the merchant, notwithstanding what Miss O may have been told. Revolut said that it had to follow the card scheme provider's processes. But it offered her £50 as a gesture of good will.

Miss O complained to our service, but our investigator said that Revolut had told her how long to expect the chargeback process to take, the refund had been paid within that timescale, and £50 was a fair reflection of the time Miss O had spent dealing with Revolut's staff.

Miss O did not accept that opinion. She wanted to know if Revolut had received the refund on the third day of the process, and whose fault it was that she had had to wait seven weeks for it. She complained that she had only been able to speak to Revolut's staff in writing via an online chat facility and not on the phone. She said the various staff members she had dealt with had given her contradictory advice. £50 was not enough to reflect the financial impact to her caused by the delay. She asked for an ombudsman's 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 done so, I do not uphold it. I will explain why.

Miss O raised her chargeback dispute on 8 November, and Revolut acknowledged it the next day and told her how long it might take. The deadline for the merchant to respond to the chargeback claim was 27 December. The refund was paid on 25 December, which was within the expected time. I don't know where the money was during that interval, but I have seen nothing to say that Revolut had it earlier than 25 December, or that Revolut delayed sending the money to Miss O, or that Revolut did anything to hold up the refund or that it caused any delay. Revolut raised the chargeback in a timely manner, appraised Miss O of how long it would take, and the chargeback was successful and was completed on time.

I don't need to investigate which third party had the money during those seven weeks, because I'm satisfied that Revolut didn't have it, and this complaint is about Revolut, not about the merchant or the card scheme provider.

During my investigation of this case, I noticed that Miss O's bank statement showed two attempted transactions of the same amount to the same merchant on the same date – one showing as declined, and one twenty seconds later showing as completed. I wondered whether the chargeback claim might have accidentally been raised against the wrong one (the declined transaction), and so I asked Revolut about that, in case that had caused the delay. Revolut has confirmed that it only raised one chargeback claim in respect of the two transactions, which would not have been the case if it had raised the wrong one at first, because then it would have been necessary to raise a second chargeback claim for the completed payment. Since there has only been one chargeback claim, I'm satisfied that Revolut challenged the correct transaction in November.

I therefore do not think that Revolut could have got the refund any quicker, nor that it is responsible for Miss O's financial difficulties while the chargeback claim was ongoing.

I have read the online chat messages, and I can see that some contradictory messages were given to Miss O in response to her asking about cancelling her chargeback claim in order to close her account. I think that £50 is fair compensation for that issue.

I can't require Revolut to change the way in which it communicates with its customers.

My final decision

My decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss O to accept or reject my decision before 12 October 2023.

Richard Wood
Ombudsman