

## The complaint

Ms G complains that Revolut Ltd (“Revolut”) won’t refund over £30,000 she lost to a cryptocurrency recovery scam in March 2023.

The details of this complaint are well known to both parties, so I won’t repeat everything again here. Instead, I will focus on giving the reasons for my 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 agree with the conclusions reached by the investigator and have decided not to uphold it for the following reasons:

- It isn’t in dispute that Ms G authorised the disputed payments she made to her cryptocurrency exchange platforms using her Revolut debit card (where her funds were subsequently transferred on to the scammers from those platforms). The payments were requested using her legitimate security credentials provided by Revolut, and the starting position is that firms ought to follow the instructions given by their customers in order for legitimate payments to be made as instructed.
- However, I’ve considered whether Revolut should have done more to prevent Ms G from falling victim to the scam, as there are some situations in which a firm should reasonably have had a closer look at the circumstances surrounding a particular transfer. For example, if it was particularly out of character.
- It’s accepted that some of the payments Ms G made were unusual given that they did trigger Revolut’s fraud prevention systems and were automatically blocked pending further enquiry – such as those made on 9 March 2023. But I accept that Revolut ought reasonably to have intervened prior to this point, given Ms G was making large payments that Revolut would’ve seen were going to known cryptocurrency platforms. And given the increase in cryptocurrency scams and heightened risk of financial harm – which Revolut would’ve been aware of by March 2023 – I think it should have made further enquiries sooner and provided Ms G with a tailored cryptocurrency scam warning. However, even if it had done so, I’m not persuaded it would have ultimately prevented the scam or any further loss. I’ll explain why.
- Revolut spoke to Ms G on 9 March 2023 through its in-app chat function after it blocked the card payments she was attempting to make to her crypto wallet. Amongst other things, it asked her about the nature of the payments and whether she used any finance managing or shared wallet applications, as well as whether anyone had asked her to download remote access software such as AnyDesk. It also asked her whether she’d been told to open the Revolut account by anyone, been encouraged to make outbound transfers, or had been promised any returns.
- Ms G told our service that she *had* been instructed by the scammer to download Any

Desk, as well as opening two different cryptocurrency wallets. However, she told Revolut that she had *not* downloaded any such software, and neither did she use any shared wallet applications. Ms G told Revolut that no one had encouraged her to open the account, which was correct as it was opened in July 2022. But she also said that she hadn't been contacted by anyone encouraging her to invest or to make the payments from the account, which wasn't true. She also said that the payment was for crypto and that she was investing in Bitcoin, but she didn't explain that it was being made in order to recover cryptocurrency she'd been told was hidden in the blockchain. So, it's clear Ms G was not providing upfront and honest answers in response to Revolut's questions.

- Ms G said she had been coached by the scammer to lie if questioned about the payments she was making. And it was based upon the answers she gave that Revolut was satisfied the payments weren't likely being made as part of a scam. I accept it could have arguably gone further and provided a tailored cryptocurrency scam warning when Ms G told it that she was buying cryptocurrency. But even if it had probed further in order to provide such a warning, I'm not persuaded she would've given honest answers, given she had been coached by the scammer on what to say.
- As a result, I'm not persuaded any earlier intervention, further probing or warnings would have likely revealed the scam, because it seems more likely than not that Ms G would've continued to provide misleading answers in order to make the payments. So, in these circumstances, I don't consider it would be fair and reasonable to hold Revolut liable for Ms G's loss.
- I also don't think there was anything more Revolut could've done to recover the money Ms G lost either. A chargeback claim would've had little prospect of succeeding, for example, given she would've received the asset she had purchased (i.e. the cryptocurrency).

I appreciate this will likely come as a disappointment to Ms G, and I'm sorry to hear she has been the victim of a cruel scam. However, in the circumstances, I do not consider it would be fair and reasonable to hold Revolut liable for her loss.

### **My final decision**

For the reasons given above, I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Ms G to accept or reject my decision before 8 April 2024.

Jack Ferris  
**Ombudsman**