

## The complaint

Mr O complains that Monzo Bank Ltd won't reimburse him after he fell victim to a job scam.

Mr O is professionally represented in bringing his complaint to our service, but for ease of reading I'll refer to all submissions as being made by Mr O directly.

## What happened

On 11 February 2025, I issued my provisional decision on this complaint. I wanted to give both parties a chance to provide any more evidence and arguments before I issued my final decision. That provisional decision forms part of this final decision and is copied below.

*The background to this complaint is well known to both parties so I won't repeat it all in detail here. But in summary, I understand it to be as follows.*

*In or around May 2023, Mr O was approached, through a messaging app, about a job opportunity. He was told the job involved completing reviews, for which he would earn salary and a commission. Believing everything to be genuine Mr O proceeded, but unknown to him at the time, he had been contacted by fraudsters. Mr O was reassured by the legitimacy of the role by initially completing training with a 'colleague' on their account, and receiving commission back to the scam platform. However, the fraudsters then persuaded Mr O to pay his own money, in order to proceed with the work.*

*Mr O was instructed to purchase cryptocurrency. Once his money had been converted into cryptocurrency it was then sent to accounts controlled by the fraudsters.*

*Detailed below are the payments Mr O made from his Monzo account as part of the scam:*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Payment value</b>
29 May 2023	£81.26
1 June 2023	£407.80
1 June 2023	£2,391.95
1 June 2023	£81.00
2 June 2023	£85.00
2 June 2023	£30.00
3 June 2023	£60.09
4 June 2023	£84.12
5 June 2023	2,300.00
5 June 2023	£650.00
5 June 2023	£920.00

*After making the final payment, Mr O tried to withdraw his commission made, but was told by the fraudster that he first needed to pay some fees. With no further funds to pay, Mr O realised he'd been the victim of a scam and contacted Monzo to raise a claim.*

*Monzo considered Mr O's claim but it declined to reimburse him. It said payments made from Mr O's Monzo account weren't the scam payments, as they were moved on to a cryptocurrency account that Mr O had control of.*

*Mr O remained unhappy and referred his complaint to our service. An investigator considered Mr O's complaint but didn't uphold it. He didn't think the payments were so unusual or out of character for Mr O that Monzo acted unreasonably by processing them without questioning them further.*

*Mr O disagreed with the investigator's view. He didn't think it was fair to set a 'payment limit' for what should be considered out of character, and argued that Monzo's systems should be adequate enough to detect fraudulent payments, even when low value and to a new customer. He also said the payments weren't in line with his usual spending and that he'd never made payments to cryptocurrency before.*

*As Mr O disagreed with the investigator's opinion, the complaint has been referred to me for a decision.*

### **What I've provisionally 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've reached the same outcome as the investigator, but for slightly different reasons. I've therefore explained this in more detail below.*

- It isn't in dispute that Mr O authorised the transactions in question. He is therefore presumed liable for the loss in the first instance. However, Monzo is aware, taking longstanding regulatory expectations and requirements into account, and what I consider to be good industry practice at the time, that it should have been on the look-out for the possibility of fraud and made additional checks before processing payments in some circumstances.*
- The payments were all of values that, in isolation, I wouldn't consider ought to have caused Monzo to provide further warnings, prior to processing. I appreciate that Mr O doesn't think there should be payment limits on what is considered unusual, and I agree that there are a number of factors that firms should take into account when considering if a payment poses a risk of fraud, not just the value. However I also have to take into account the number of genuine transactions Monzo processes each day that will appear the same as these scam payments Mr O made. Monzo has a difficult balancing act to meet between protecting customers from financial harm from fraud and not inconveniencing customers making genuine transactions. I therefore think it's reasonable that there should be some form of 'trigger point' in a payment journey before I would expect a form of intervention by a firm.*
- Having said that, by the time Mr O made the payment of £650 on 5 June 2023, I think a pattern of payments was beginning to emerge that indicated Mr O was at a higher risk of financial harm from fraud. This was the second payment made that day, following four consecutive days of payments to an identifiable cryptocurrency platform, and the amount Mr O was sending on this fifth day was overall the highest so far. I therefore think at this point Monzo ought to have provided a warning to Mr O, prior to processing the payment.*
- Considering the increase in prevalence of cryptocurrency investment scams by the time Mr O fell victim to this scam, and the fact that Mr O's payments were going identifiably to a cryptocurrency platform, I would have expected the warning Monzo provided to have been tailored to cryptocurrency investment scams, setting out the key hallmarks of such a scam.*

- *However, Mr O, of course, didn't fall victim to an investment scam, but a job scam. Considering the particular details of this scam, I don't think that he would be sufficiently impacted by a warning related to investment scams that this would have stopped him from making further payments towards the scam he fell victim to, as I don't consider there was enough crossover between the two scams that this would have alerted Mr O that something was amiss.*
- *Therefore, while I think Monzo ought to have done more here, I don't think proportionate action would have stopped Mr O from making further payments towards the scam. As I don't find Monzo could've stopped the payments from occurring with reasonable intervention, it follows that I don't hold it responsible for the losses Mr O incurred.*
- *I'm also not persuaded there were any prospects of Monzo successfully recovering the funds, given the money was used to purchase cryptocurrency from a legitimate provider.*

*I appreciate this wasn't the outcome Mr O was hoping for, and I'm very sorry to hear of the impact this callous scam has had on Mr O. However as I haven't found Monzo is responsible for causing Mr O's losses, it follows that I can't ask it to reimburse the funds Mr O lost to this scam.*

### ***My provisional decision***

*My provisional decision is that I don't uphold Mr O's complaint against Monzo Bank Ltd.*

Monzo accepted my provisional decision but Mr O didn't. To summarise, he said that he has no history of making cryptocurrency payments and that the two payments he made for over £2,000 exceeded his usual spending patterns. He argued that by the time he made these payments, cryptocurrency payments were known to carry elevated risk and so Monzo ought to have used human intervention to question these higher payments. As he hadn't been coached by the fraudster, Mr O has argued he would've been honest about the payment purpose and the scam would've been uncovered.

### **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've thought about the points Mr O has raised in response to my provisional decision. However, having done so, while I'm sorry to disappoint Mr O, my opinion remains the same and I am not upholding his complaint. I've provided my reasons below, covering Mr O's additional points.

I agree with Mr O that payments of £2,000 exceeded his *usual* spending and that firms such as Monzo ought to have known by June 2023 that payments to cryptocurrency carried a heightened fraud risk. However, I still can't agree that I therefore think proportionate intervention here was human intervention. I don't think the payments were so out of character in the circumstances that intervention further than a warning relating to cryptocurrency investment scams was warranted, and I've already set out in my provisional decision why I don't think this would have impacted Mr O's decision to proceed with this scam.

Therefore while I appreciate this isn't the outcome he was hoping for, I still don't think Monzo can be held responsible for Mr O's losses and it follows that I can't ask Monzo to reimburse him.

**My final decision**

My final decision is that I don't uphold Mr O's complaint against Monzo Bank Ltd.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr O to accept or reject my decision before 25 March 2025.

Kirsty Upton  
**Ombudsman**