

The complaint

Mr S has complained about the information provided to him by his pension provider The Prudential Assurance Company Limited (Pru) when he enquired about his options.

What happened

Mr S was approaching 55 years old and called Pru to discuss his options. He was able to take his pension benefits from the age 55 but explained he would be retiring later.

Mr S says he was informed he could continue to make payments into the pension fund if he chose not to take the benefit and was disappointed to find out this was not the case.

Our Investigator looked at Mr S's complaint but couldn't find any evidence that showed Pru had told Mr S he could continue contributing to the fund after his 55th birthday.

However, Pru did pay Mr S compensation totalling £200 for delays in sending Mr S information and call waiting times he encountered when making his enquiries.

Our Investigator felt the compensation offer for delays was fair, and as he was unable to find any evidence that Mr S was given incorrect advice, he didn't think Pru should have to do anything more.

Mr S disagreed so this complaint has been passed to me to decide.

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.

The circumstances of this complaint are not in dispute, so I have not set them out again here in detail.

Mr S received correspondence by post in the time leading up to his 55th birthday. It is clear from the information available that Mr S planned to continue working past the age of 55, and so understandably he contacted Pru to explain this and discuss his options. Mr S also explained that he was taking advice about his pension options independently.

I have listened to all of the available calls between Mr S and Pru and I am unable to see that a discussion took place about him continuing to contribute towards the fund. The calls were generally about deferring the claim until a later date.

Pru explained Mr S had 30 days from his 55th birthday to defer the claim date or it would be automatically deferred to his 75th birthday. Pru also explained the minimal deferral period was one year.

I think Pru were clear in the calls Mr S had with it and answered his questions clearly. It was also clear that Mr S would be taking independent advice before deciding which option to take. But understandably this process would have been made more stressful with delays and

long call waiting times.

Pru has already offered Mr S a total of £200 compensation for the delays and long waiting times. This is inline with what I would have requested if Mr S's complaint came to us without an offer of compensation. So, I am not minded to ask Pru to increase the offer.

Having been sent a copy of the call recordings we have available Mr S has said the calls may have been altered to suit Pru's side of the story. But I haven't seen anything to suggest this is the case.

Having considered Mr S's complaint in full I think Pru has done enough and I don't require it to do anymore to resolve Mr S's complaint.

My final decision

I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr S to accept or reject my decision before 18 April 2022.

Terry Woodham
Ombudsman