

## **The complaint**

Mr W has complained about ReAssure Limited's administration of his personal pension.

## **What happened**

In September 2020, Mr W's pension transferred from a provider I'll refer to as 'L' to ReAssure. Mr W and his employer were making contributions to Mr W's pension, and two months' contributions were accidentally sent to L after the transfer completed. However, L was able to identify this and in November 2020, it told ReAssure that the contributions would be redirected to it.

Following this, Mr W noted that most of the contributions paid since then hadn't been applied to his pension. Mr W complained in January 2021. In February 2021 ReAssure responded, explaining that it had received all the contributions but had to apply these to his account manually and it would take some time. It offered Mr W £100 and assured him that the contributions would be applied from the date received and he would not be financially disadvantaged.

Unhappy with ReAssure's progress, a few months later Mr W made a further complaint. ReAssure responded in June 2021 explaining it was working on applying the contributions to his account, but it couldn't confirm when this would be completed. It offered another £100 for the inconvenience caused.

Mr W referred his complaint to our service as he was concerned about the time taken by ReAssure to apply the contributions to his pension.

Our investigator upheld the complaint. He noted that a significant number of contributions had yet to be applied to Mr W's pension, over a year after the problems had first arisen. He thought this was causing Mr W significant distress and inconvenience, particularly as he was approaching retirement. The investigator recommended that ReAssure should pay Mr W an extra £200 (£400 in total) and that Mr W's pension should be dealt with as a priority.

ReAssure didn't accept this so the complaint was referred to me to make a final decision. ReAssure thought the £200 already paid to Mr W was sufficient compensation for the delays – it said it was dealing with Mr W's pension contributions as quickly as possible.

Mr W told the investigator that ReAssure had contacted him since our involvement to confirm the missing amounts but its figures weren't correct – he said he was still missing contributions totalling over £12,000 from his pension.

## **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'm upholding the complaint for largely the same reasons as the investigator.

It isn't in dispute that Mr W's pension, as far as he is able to see online, does not currently reflect its true value. ReAssure is in the process of manually adding in contributions that have been made over the last 18 months and Mr W has most recently said that over £12,000 is missing from his account. Mr W has also told us that he's asked his employer to provide evidence of the contributions that have been made to ReAssure – so there should be no reason why ReAssure isn't able to ensure the pension account balance is correct.

It isn't exactly clear why the matter is taking so long to rectify. ReAssure initially said that payments had to be applied manually and took five days to appear in the account online. But that doesn't explain why so many contributions remain missing from Mr W's account. Or why it's taken such a long time to rectify this. In a letter to Mr W dated 3 May 2022, ReAssure said that it experienced an issue applying the 18 November 2020 contribution which meant it had to be applied manually. And as ReAssure is required to apply contributions in a sequential order, it took it longer to apply the next contribution in the sequence, which has resulted in a knock-on effect. But I still don't think this explains the significant delay – as I've said, it's had over 18 months to put the matter right. I also acknowledge that at various points ReAssure has asked Mr W for information relating to his pension, but Mr W has provided what was required promptly. So I don't think this has been holding things up.

ReAssure says it is doing everything it can to apply Mr W's contributions to his account as soon as possible. And I would expect ReAssure to ensure that it continues to prioritise the matter. Mr W is approaching retirement; although he isn't expecting to retire until 2024 it isn't unreasonable that he wants to understand the value of his pension and how much income he can expect to receive from his plan. So, it is imperative that the issues are resolved as a matter of urgency.

In terms of compensation, ReAssure offered Mr W £200 in total in June 2021. Over a year has passed since then with little progress. And it is clear to me that the matter continues to cause Mr W distress and inconvenience, particularly in light of his looming retirement. So, I think that ReAssure should pay Mr W an extra £200 to compensate him for this.

I'm surprised that ReAssure didn't accept the investigator's view on this point. While I accept that ReAssure is going to ensure that Mr W isn't financially disadvantaged – the missing contributions will be applied from the date they were paid – I think it shows a lack of understanding on its part about the very real concerns Mr W has about his pension and the impact the issues have had on him. And I should point out that while I'm awarding extra compensation to Mr W in settlement of this complaint – that is, up to this point in time – it doesn't prevent Mr W from raising a further complaint about future delays should the issue not be resolved in a timely manner.

### **Putting things right**

To compensate Mr W for the maladministration of his pension contributions, ReAssure should pay Mr W an extra £200 (£400 in total) for the distress and inconvenience this has caused him.

**My final decision**

For the reasons set out above, I'm upholding this complaint.

ReAssure Limited should pay Mr W £400 in total in settlement of this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr W to accept or reject my decision before 31 August 2022.

Hannah Wise  
**Ombudsman**