

The complaint

Mr W has complained about the way ManyPets Ltd dealt with the renewal of his pet insurance policy.

What happened

Before Mr W's insurance policy was due for renewal on 31 October 2022, he contacted ManyPets and made some adjustments to the policy in order to reduce the price of the premium. ManyPets wrote to Mr W and told him his new premium would be £29.18 a month and it would set up a new direct debit for that amount.

In June 2023 Mr W noticed that ManyPets had failed to take any payments from him. ManyPets told him this was due to a system error on its part and asked him to pay the outstanding premiums. Mr W paid two months' premiums at that time. ManyPets tried to collect all the outstanding premiums by direct debit but Mr W cancelled the mandate to ensure the payments weren't taken. Mr W thinks he should have been offered a payment plan.

After Mr W brought his complaint to this service, ManyPets apologised and said he had up to the next renewal date to pay the outstanding premiums. It also said it was sending him a voucher of £30 as a gesture of goodwill. Mr W has since paid the amount due but told us having to pay over £200 in one go was difficult for him.

Our Investigator thought the offer of compensation from ManyPets was fair and in line with our guidelines.

As Mr W didn't agree, the matter has been referred to me.

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 have to decide whether ManyPets acted fairly and reasonably in response to the mistakes it made. These were not collecting the monthly payments of the premium by direct debit. Also when Mr W pointed out this mistake, it didn't give him the option of a payment plan for the outstanding premiums. I think it did act fairly and I'll explain why.

I don't penalise financial businesses for their failings. So when determining complaints of this nature, it isn't the mistake itself that I consider but the impact this had on the consumer. In this case I'm sorry to hear about the difficulties Mr W had in sorting out this mistake which involved several phone calls and the inconvenience of having to pay a relatively large amount of money in one go rather than having the payments spread by way of a payment plan.

Although I appreciate that it falls below Mr W's expectations, I'm satisfied that ManyPets' apology and compensation offer was a fair and reasonable reflection of the impact its poor service had on Mr W. In the circumstances I don't think there are grounds for me to require ManyPets to do any more.

My final decision

ManyPets Ltd has already made an offer of a voucher for £30 to settle the complaint and I think this offer is fair in all the circumstances.

So my decision is that ManyPets Ltd should pay Mr W £30 in vouchers if it has not already done so.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr W to accept or reject my decision before 30 November 2023.

Elizabeth Grant
Ombudsman