

The complaint

Mrs F complains about obstructions she says were caused by ReAssure Limited when surrendering her Flexible Mortgage Individual Savings Account (FMISA).

Mrs F is being represented in her complaint by a family member. For ease I will refer to all actions as being those of Mrs F.

What happened

Mrs F complain to ReAssure when the request to surrender her account took longer than she thought it should.

ReAssure looked into what happened but didn't uphold the complaint. They said it wasn't possible to accept an online surrender request for this type of account, so a signed form was required. When this was received they say the surrender was processed within their normal timescales.

Remaining unhappy Mrs F brought her complaint to our service where one of our Investigators considered the issues. Whilst understanding the frustration they thought ReAssure followed their procedures when surrendering the account, so the correct amount of money was received.

Mrs F said ReAssure didn't provide the level of customer care expected.

Because an agreement couldn't be reached the matter has come to me for a 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.

Mrs F has provided a lot of information about the complaint and it's clear how strongly she feels about what happened. I want to assure Mrs F that I've read and considered everything provided even if I don't mention it all in detail. I've summarised some of what happened which reflects the informal nature of our service.

There are three different businesses involved in the management and administration of the account. This is because the product is split into two parts – the ISA and the life insurance cover. So I can understand why it may not always have been clear to Mrs F which business was responsible for which activities. And I know there were some difficulties at times with this.

This decision only considers the role of ReAssure and in this situation that role was limited to surrendering or paying out the account.

In mid July 2023 Mrs F submitted an online request to surrender the account however ReAssure required a signed form to do this.

A few days later when contact was made with ReAssure the Payment Release Form was provided which was signed and returned.

ReAssure received the form on 28 July 2023 and it was processed within six working days.

Looking at what happened ReAssure followed their policies and procedures when processing the surrender of the account. And I think they acted fairly and reasonably when doing so. ReAssure say they have a 10 day service standard and the surrender was processed within this timeframe.

It's not my role to say what procedures a business can have in place. If ReAssure require a paper based form in order to surrender the account then it is entitled to do so. Though I acknowledge this caused some inconvenience for Mrs F.

Looking at the timeline of events I think ReAssure acted quickly to let Mrs F know of the requirements and provide the form. And when the form was received it was processed within their service standards. I haven't seen any evidence of delays on the part of ReAssure when processing the surrender.

Some of the complaint points seem to come from a comparison with another account held by a family member. I can't comment on anything about that account as it isn't the subject of this complaint. And my role here is to investigate the surrender of Mrs F's account which is what I've done. I can understand why the comparison has been made, but that doesn't however mean any errors were made with this account.

Sometimes there might be differences in how long it takes to process transactions on an account. But the surrender was processed within the service level agreement, and I haven't seen any evidence of unnecessary delays.

Having carefully considered everything that happen I'm satisfied ReAssure acted fairly and reasonably when processing the withdrawal so won't be asking them to take any further action.

My final decision

For the reasons I've explained above, my decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs F to accept or reject my decision before 2 January 2025.

Warren Wilson

Ombudsman