

The complaint

Mr C complains that The Royal London Mutual Insurance Society Limited ('RL') incorrectly informed him that details about his pension's investments could be found online.

What happened

In January 2024, Mr C telephoned RL asking for the price details of the funds his stakeholder pension is invested in. Mr C explained that having looked at the statement he'd recently received from RL, it suggested that details of all RL's funds and their respective prices were readily available on their website. But, having looked at their website, Mr C didn't believe that was the case.

Mr C decided to formally complain to RL. In summary, he said that from the information he'd been shown by RL's call handler, it didn't give him enough information to make any financial decisions regarding his funds and their website looked 'half finished'.

After reviewing Mr C's complaint, RL explained that they were sorry he'd been unable to locate the information that he'd needed to make an informed decision about his pension. They also said, in summary, that because of the age of Mr C's pension, and the fact that it's considered a 'legacy product' which is no longer offered to new customers, there is only limited details of the plan and fund his monies are invested in on their website. RL explained that they'd arranged for fund fact sheets to be sent out in the post and they'd also included a number of hyperlinks that he could click on which would take him directly to the information on their website.

Mr C was unhappy with RL's response, so he referred his complaint to this service. In summary, he repeated the same concerns that he'd set out to RL. The complaint was then considered by one of our Investigators. She concluded that RL had provided Mr C with the correct information relating to his pension to allow him to decide on his investments and as such, didn't feel it necessary to ask them to do anything more.

Mr C, however, disagreed with our Investigator's findings. In summary, he said that given RL had accepted that they only provide limited information about his specific pension on their website but will do nothing to improve things for him, there was little point in apologising if they were going to keep doing the same thing.

Our Investigator was not persuaded to change her view as she didn't believe Mr C had presented any new arguments she'd not already considered or responded to. As Mr C was unhappy with that outcome, the case has been passed 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.

I have summarised this complaint in less detail than Mr C has done and I've done so using my own words. The purpose of my decision isn't to address every single point raised by all of the parties involved. If there's something I've not mentioned, it isn't because I've ignored it - I haven't. I'm satisfied that I don't need to comment on every individual argument to be able to reach what I think is the right outcome. No discourtesy is intended by this; our rules allow me to do this and it simply reflects the informal nature of our service as a free alternative to the courts.

My role is to consider the evidence presented by Mr C and RL in order to reach what I think is an independent, fair and reasonable decision based on the facts of the case. In deciding what's fair and reasonable, I must consider the relevant law, regulation and best industry practice. Where there's conflicting information about what happened and gaps in what we know, my role is to weigh up the evidence we do have, but it is for me to decide, based on the available information that I've been given, what's more likely than not to have happened. And, having done so, I'm not upholding Mr C's complaint - I'll explain why below.

What information RL choses to put on its website is a commercial decision for them alone. It's not within the remit of this service to direct RL on the funds or products it must include, or the level of detail on each one and how that insight should be presented as long as whatever information that is provided is clear fair and not misleading. Mr C holds a legacy stakeholder product with RL; that means the pension his monies are saved into isn't available to new customers. As such, RL say that some information about the plan isn't available on its website. However, from what I've seen of the information that is on RL's website about his particular pension, in my opinion, the particulars about the product are clearly presented and detail the broad range of features that the plan offers along with links to the various funds on offer. There's also a telephone number and an address provided that consumers can contact if they've got any further questions.

In addition to RL's website, they provide an annual statement to Mr C each year that details how his plan is performing. RL have now sent out fund details in the post to assist Mr C. From what I've seen of the information that RL has shared, I'm satisfied that Mr C has enough information to be able to shape his decision making. And, whilst RL can't give Mr C specific advice tailored to his own circumstances, their helpline is able to provide any further factual information to him that he might need that may not be available on their website.

It seems that Mr C wasn't initially able to locate details of his plan or fund on RL's website. RL have now signposted this to Mr C and provided a link to the wider funds available. I've seen nothing to persuade me that RL have provided Mr C with inaccurate or misleading information about his pension so I'm not upholding his complaint.

My final decision

I'm not upholding Mr C's complaint and as such, I won't be instructing The Royal London Mutual Insurance Society Limited to take any further action.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr C to accept or reject my decision before 5 November 2024.

Simon Fox
Ombudsman