

The complaint

Mr R complains about the way Financial Administration Services Limited (Fidelity) administered a transfer of assets over to their platform.

What happened

Mr R requested the transfer of a range of financial assets from a third-party to the Fidelity platform, in September 2022.

After significant delays, the majority were transferred over by January 2023. However, the full transfer didn't complete until June 2023. Mr R was unhappy and said Fidelity could have done more and that the delays had lost him opportunities to trade.

As well as this Mr R complained that Fidelity had sold down assets of his not available on their platform, at what he said was extra cost and against his instruction. He also said Fidelity should pay him £500 for a transfer incentive in place offering to refund early exit fees.

Fidelity recognised how long the transfer took but said they'd acted fairly and done all they could. They explained the transfer was complicated with over 600 different assets involved. Fidelity also recognised Mr R might have experienced extra cost to untransferable assets being sold down, instead of him being given the opportunity to switch or transfer them. They said they refunded the extra costs and offered Mr R £200 for this.

The case was brought to our service for an independent review. Our investigator looked into it and he also thought Fidelity had acted fairly with the transfer and weren't responsible for avoidable delays. He thought their offer for the sale of unsupported assets was fair and concluded that they didn't need to pay an exit fee as he wasn't satisfied Mr R had been charged one.

Mr R remained unhappy and amongst his points in response, he said:

- The transfer took too long and longer than stated and Fidelity could have done more.
- He was restricted from trading and rebalancing.
- Feels he should still be paid the £500 incentive for expenses in selling.
- He should be compensated for the time taken and for the loss of opportunity and distress caused to him.

As no agreement was reached, 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.

Having done so, I agree with the outcome reached by the investigator. I'll explain why. I've set out the key issues I think are important here. And I've answered them below in turn.

Transfer delays

Firstly, I want to say that I can see Mr R's transfer to Fidelity's platform took too long. It involved a considerable number of assets and a considerable amount of money. So, I know this would have been a distressing and worrying time for him.

However, as Fidelity's own transfer conditions state, transfer times can vary. In this case, there was a large number of different assets involved and a number of reasons why it took longer and was more complex to complete.

I have reviewed the timeline of events and based on the evidence provided to me, I can't see that Fidelity were responsible for any avoidable delays that they should compensate Mr R for.

Initially they were waiting on information including a current valuation from the transferor. This was delayed due to continued trading on the account. A signed letter of authority doesn't seem to have been provided until the November and then Fidelity were waiting on further information from the transferor platform. In December 2022 the assets were having to be sent in batches due to the value and volume and a new form was required of Mr R, which wasn't received until 21 December 2022. The final transfer request was sent on 12 January 2023 and the majority of assets do appear to have been transferred by the end of that month.

Whilst I know this was too long and Mr R says he missed opportunities to trade in this time. I can't hold Fidelity responsible for that and it is partly a result of such a transfer. I know there was still residual amounts transferred after January 2023. However, again, I haven't seen anything to conclude this was the fault of Fidelity.

Sale of untransferable assets

Not all assets that Mr R had requested to be transferred to Fidelity were able to be held on their platform. Having listened to a call from Mr R to Fidelity in March 2023, I am satisfied that he told them that he would trade these assets himself, rather than them being sold down. However, he wasn't given the opportunity to do this.

Fidelity have shown they have refunded approximately £289 in extra costs from doing this and offered Mr R £200 compensation for the impact of this. I think this is fair in the circumstances and won't be asking Fidelity to do any more than this.

Exit fee transfer incentive

Fidelity acknowledges that they offered an incentive of up to £500 as a refund of exit fees for anyone who is charged in the process of transferring to them. In this case, I haven't been provided with any evidence of Mr R being charged any such fees by his previous platform provider.

Mr R has asked for the refund of fees he experienced in selling assets that couldn't be transferred to Fidelity. However, this wasn't the incentive or an offer and Mr R chose to go ahead with the transfer. I haven't seen anything to conclude that they should refund these amounts and I don't think it would be fair to ask them to do so.

In summary, Mr R's transfer took too long but I haven't seen sufficient evidence to conclude that Fidelity was responsible for any avoidable delays. Therefore, despite the significant

distress and inconvenience I can see Mr R suffered, I can't ask them to do anything further to put things right. Mr R also didn't have to pay any exit fees to his previous provider so I can't ask Fidelity to refund anything there. Their offer of £200 on top of the costs experienced for selling untransferable assets is a fair one in my opinion, considering the impact on Mr R.

My final decision

My final decision, for the reasons set out above, is that the offer from Financial Administration Services Limited of £200 compensation is fair. They should pay this if they haven't already done so.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr R to accept or reject my decision before 22 October 2024.

Yoni Smith
Ombudsman