

The complaint

Mrs B and Mr S have complained about the administration of a policy by Aviva Life & Pensions UK Limited.

What happened

The background to this complaint is known to the parties so it serves no purpose for me to repeat it in detail here. In summary Mrs B experienced difficulties when asking Aviva to distribute the parts of the policy remaining equally to the three beneficiaries. Aviva acknowledged the distress and inconvenience caused and offered £250 in compensation.

Our investigator thought that this was fair but also said that Aviva should provide Mrs B with the unit re-assignment date and the value of the units at the dates of assignment as soon as possible. Neither party responded to our investigator's view.

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've summarised the background to this complaint – no discourtesy is intended by my approach which reflects the informal nature of this service. If I don't comment on something, it's not because I haven't considered it. It's because I've focused on what I find are the key issues in this complaint. My approach is in line with the rules we operate under. I agree with the conclusion reached by our investigator, I'll explain why.

I do understand why Mrs B complained on behalf of the trust. In June 2022 she had asked Aviva to confirm the date of assignment and the value of units transferred. The information was needed, not least because of potential tax implications and necessary disclosure to the HMRC. Mrs B was obliged to contact Aviva on several occasions, and I accept that she found this very stressful. Aviva advised her that the request would be treated as a priority – but this doesn't appear to have happened.

Valuations were then sent – but they were current at the time of sending – which was months after the date of assignment. Mrs B was also concerned that this information, post assignment, shouldn't have been shared with her.

Aviva recognised that it had caused the trustees inconvenience, amended the address on the live policy and increased its original offer of compensation of £150 to £250. Mrs B accepted this offer of compensation, but still needed to know the information she had requested initially – the value of the assets at the date of transfer.

My final decision

My final decision is that I uphold this complaint.

I require Aviva Life & Pensions UK Limited to:

- Pay Mrs B and Mr S a total of £250 in compensation, it may deduct any sums already paid in respect of this complaint.
- Provide Mrs B with the unit re-assignment date/s and the value of the units at the date/s of transfer.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs B and Mr S to accept or reject my decision before 3 December 2024.

Lindsey Woloski

Ombudsman