

The complaint

Ms G complains that she has been unable to stop the ongoing advice service and related charges for her investment fund with St. James Place Wealth Management Plc trading as St. Jame's Place (SJP) and about the way she has been treated by them.

What happened

Ms G holds an investment account with SJP and complained about their conduct in dealing with her in October 2024 as well as correspondence she received which she says was inappropriate. She says the communications were intimidating and insensitive and she experienced a patronising attitude from her financial adviser.

She says SJP wrote to her in September 2024 addressing the letter to her and her late husband, knowing that he had passed away in June 2024 as the Partner who was also her financial advisor attended the funeral.

She complained to SJP expressing the distress and upset that had been caused but didn't receive a response. She said she also received a Christmas card from the financial advisor which she found to be unprofessional seeing as they hadn't responded to her complaint about the communication sent in September 2024. She then contacted SJP to make a further complaint in January 2025 and added that her complaint was not resolved within the eight-week timeframe as expected.

SJP say they were unable to send her a full response within eight weeks of the complaint, so they gave her referral rights to our service on 27 February 2025. A full response was given in April 2025 upholding the complaint. SJP apologised for the distress and inconvenience caused and awarded Ms G £300 in recognition of this.

Ms G brought her complaint to this service and didn't accept SJP's response in April 2025. To resolve this complaint, she would like:

- the ongoing advice charges added to her account to be cancelled
- the ongoing advice charges already paid to be refunded
- for the financial advisor to be removed
- a written apology for the upset caused
- £1,000 compensation for the distress and inconvenience caused.

An investigator here considered the complaint and didn't uphold it. He said he couldn't consider the complaint about the advice charges as this part of the complaint hadn't been raised with SJP yet. In relation to the other complaint points, he was persuaded that the offer made by SJP to resolve the complaint was an appropriate resolution of the complaint. As Ms G didn't agree with the investigator, this came 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.

Whilst I may not address each point individually, I would like to reassure Ms G that I have considered all the information provided including more recent communications, and reached what I think is an independent, fair and reasonable decision based on the facts of this case.

I'm aware this is quite a sensitive situation as Ms G's husband had only recently passed away when the communications from SJP were received. I appreciate the impact the situation had on her, but I am likely to disappoint her further when I say I won't be upholding this complaint and for much of the same reason the investigator has already given.

There is no dispute that Ms G's husband was added to the communication sent by SJP, and they've accepted this error. SJP have also sent numerous other emails and communications in August 2024 and after the Advisor wrote to her acknowledging the difficult time she is going through, offering their support and requested the death certificate. SJP has made several attempts to contact her and speak about how to resolve any issues.

By her own admission, SJP has written to her and apologised for the errors in previous correspondence. I appreciate this did not have the desired effect, particularly as the original complaint had not been resolved. Looking at all the evidence, I am persuaded the communications she complains about were sent in error and I've seen no evidence to suggest the apology was sent in anything other than good faith.

In terms of the amount of compensation awarded, I understand this has been a difficult time and I don't intend for this to undermine the strength of Ms G's feelings, but I do consider the level of compensation awarded to be fair. In the circumstances of this case, the £300 compensation is reasonable to reflect the frustration and upset caused by SJP's mistake. The evidence shows SJP made several attempts to support Ms G and resolve the situation and as I said above, I'm persuaded SJP have made a genuine attempt to apologise. This amount is also in line with the amount we would award for this situation, so I won't be asking SJP to do anything further.

I would also add that I have noted Ms G's concerns in relation contact from SJP and the specific financial advisor. It is not within the remit of our service to tell a business how it should operate, that is the role of the regulator, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA). If she continues to have concerns about the way in which SJP and its advisors operate, she can raise a complaint with the FCA.

For the sake of clarity, I will point out that the complaint about the advice charges has not been considered as a part of this complaint.

My final decision

For the reasons given above, I do not uphold this complaint against St. James Place Wealth Management Plc (trading as St. Jame's Place).

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Ms G to accept or reject my decision before 22 August 2025.

Naima Abdul-Rasool
Ombudsman