

The complaint

Mr H has complained that Aviva Life & Pensions UK Limited (Aviva) sent him an incorrect valuation for his pension plan. Mr H claims that Aviva was attempting to defraud him and that he's suffered a financial loss as a result.

What happened

Mr H holds a personal pension plan with Aviva. On 22 January 2025 Aviva sent Mr H a retirement pack for his pension plan. In this pack Aviva told Mr H that on 22 January 2025 his pension plan was worth £22,244.96.

On 1 February 2025 Mr H contacted Aviva to question the value quoted in the above retirement pack, as he thought it was much lower than values he'd previously been given by Aviva. Aviva responded to Mr H on 22 February 2025. It said that the value shown in the 22 January 2025 retirement pack was wrong. Aviva apologised for its error and sent Mr H an updated retirement pack which said that his pension plan was in fact worth £42,244.96.

Mr H wasn't happy with Aviva's response to his query, so he raised a complaint with it on 28 February 2025. Mr H claimed that Aviva was attempting to defraud him by telling him that his pension plan was worth much less than its correct value.

Aviva issued its final response letter to Mr H's complaint on 22 April 2025. Aviva apologised for its error in sending Mr H an incorrect valuation. To compensate Mr H for the inconvenience its error had caused, and as an apology, Aviva sent him £100.

Mr H was still unhappy with Aviva response to his complaint. He thought that he should receive compensation of at least £25,000. Mr H brought his complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service. Aviva then contacted this Service to offer to increase the amount of compensation it would pay Mr H for the inconvenience he'd suffered from £100 to £300.

Aviva also said that it would carry out a loss assessment calculation to identify if its error had delayed Mr H from taking his retirement benefits and had suffered a financial loss as a result. Aviva initially offered to complete this loss assessment calculation to identify if Mr H had suffered any loss if he took his pension benefits within 14 days from 9 June 2025. Mr H didn't take any pension benefits within this timeframe. Aviva then offered to complete the same loss assessment calculation should Mr H take his pension benefits within 28 days from 25 July 2025, but again Mr H didn't take any benefits from his Aviva pension within this later timeframe. Mr H rejected Aviva's offer.

One of our Investigators reviewed Mr H's complaint. Their view was that Aviva had sent an incorrect valuation to Mr H in January 2025 and therefore upheld Mr H's complaint. However, our Investigator didn't think that there was any evidence to show that Aviva had attempted to defraud Mr H. Our Investigator did think that Aviva's error had resulted in Mr H suffering distress and inconvenience though, and that Aviva should pay Mr H a total of £400 compensation for this.

Mr H didn't agree with our Investigator's view and asked for his complaint to be considered by an Ombudsman.

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.

In its final response letter of 22 April 2025 Aviva admitted that it had quoted an incorrect pension plan value in the retirement pack it sent to Mr H on 22 January 2025. Aviva apologised for its error and paid Mr H £100 for the inconvenience its error had caused.

I therefore don't think that there's any dispute that Aviva did send Mr H an incorrect pension plan value in January 2025. However, Aviva has said that the incorrect valuation was the result of a typographical error, caused by an individual employee. Mr H has claimed that Aviva was attempting to defraud him and that he should be paid compensation of at least £25,000. I will therefore consider Aviva's error and the claim made by Mr H.

As I've said above, I don't think that there is any dispute between the parties in this complaint that the retirement pack sent to Mr H on 22 January 2025 incorrectly quoted the value of Mr H's pension plan at £22,244.96.

After Mr H had questioned the value he'd received with Aviva, he then received a letter from Aviva on 22 February 2025 which said: "*The value of £22,244.96 quoted in our letter dated 22 January 2025 was incorrect. Please accept our apologies for this. We have arranged for a new option selection pack to be issued*". The letter went on to tell Mr H that the correct value of his pension plan on 22 February 2025 was "*£44,643.30*".

Aviva then sent Mr H a new retirement pack which was dated 24 February 2025. This said that the value of Mr H's pension plan on 24 February 2024 was £44,244.96. I think that this meant that the value of Mr H's pension plan had fallen by £398.34 in the two days between 22 February 2025 and 24 February 2025 (£44,643.30 - £44,244.96).

However, Aviva has now told this Service that the pension value it quoted in the retirement pack it sent to Mr H on 24 February 2025 was also wrong. Aviva has said that the value of £44,244.96 that it gave in the 24 February 2025 retirement pack was not the value of Mr H's pension plan on 24 February 2025 but was instead the correct value of Mr H's pension plan on 20 January 2025. Aviva has also said that the correct value of Mr H's pension plan on 22 January 2025 was £44,400.68.

I therefore think that when Aviva sent Mr H his 22 January 2025 retirement pack it told him that his pension plan was worth £22,244.96, whereas the correct value on that date was £44,400.68, and the value two days earlier, on 20 January 2025, was £44,244.96.

Aviva has also told this Service that the correct value of Mr H's pension plan on 24 February 2025, when it sent him his second retirement pack, was £44,527.92, and not £44,244.96 as Aviva had quoted in this retirement pack.

Aviva has further told this Service that a request was made on 21 January 2025 to confirm the value of Mr H's pension plan and that its records show that the calculated value was £44,244.96. Aviva had added that it thinks that the wrong value of £22,244.96 was given in the 22 January 2025 retirement pack because of *"a processing error by the individual who produced the quote and not a system issues"*.

My conclusion is that Aviva sent Mr H wrong values for his pension plan in the retirement packs it sent to him on 22 January 2025 and 24 February 2025.

As I've said above, Mr H has claimed that Aviva has been attempting to defraud him and that because of this he should be paid compensation of at least £25,000. But I haven't seen any evidence to support Mr H's claim, and Mr H hasn't supplied any evidence to demonstrate that Aviva was trying to defraud him. I've also not seen any evidence to show that any monies were removed from Mr H's pension plan. Instead, I think that monies remained in Mr H's pension plan and that instead an incorrect valuation was sent to him in error.

I therefore think it's reasonable to conclude that the wrong valuation of £22,244.96 was more likely as result of an error, which Aviva has said was a human error, and not due to Aviva trying to defraud Mr H.

I have however considered whether Aviva's error has resulted in any financial loss for Mr H, for example, if Aviva's error had delayed him taking his retirement benefits or if it caused Mr H a loss in any other way. Mr H hasn't provided any evidence to show if he suffered any financial loss due to Aviva's error. I've also not seen any evidence to show that Aviva's error resulted in any delay in Mr H taking his pension benefits or of him suffering any other financial loss.

I do however conclude that Aviva's error would very likely have caused Mr H some distress and inconvenience. He had to contact Aviva to question the value shown in the January 2025 retirement pack and as the value given was some £22,000 less than the correct value of his pension. I think it's reasonable to conclude that this will likely have caused some upset, worry and concern for Mr H.

I also think that Mr H had to wait some time before he received a correct valuation for his pension plan from Aviva. He contacted Aviva on 1 February 2025 but then didn't receive a reply until 22 February 2025 which then told him that the January 2025 retirement pack valuation was wrong and what the correct value of his pension was.

I also think that Aviva made errors in the 24 February 2025 valuation pack it then sent to Mr H, as well as in the 22 January 2025 valuation pack.

I therefore think it would be reasonable and fair for Aviva to compensate Mr H for the distress and inconvenience its error caused. In their view, our Investigator said that Aviva should pay Mr H total compensation of £400. I think that an award of this level would be fair where the impact of Aviva's error would have caused Mr H considerable distress, upset and worry and where the impact of its error could have lasted over many weeks or months. But I also think that this level of award could be fair if Aviva's error had a serious short-term impact on Mr H.

I think that this is a reasonable description of the level of distress and inconvenience that Mr H would likely have suffered because of Aviva's error. I therefore conclude that a total award of £400 compensation for the distress and inconvenience that Mr H will have suffered due to Aviva's error is fair and reasonable in this case.

I am therefore upholding part of Mr H's complaint as Aviva sent him incorrect retirement packs for his pension plan and will now set out what Aviva should do to put things right for him for this error. I have however not seen any evidence to show that Aviva was attempting to defraud Mr H, so I am not able to uphold this claim from Mr H. I've also not seen any evidence to show that Aviva's error caused Mr H any financial loss.

Putting things right

I've set out above why I think Aviva should compensate Mr H for the distress and inconvenience I think he's suffered due to its error.

Aviva should now pay Mr H total compensation of £400. Aviva has however said that it's already paid Mr H compensation of £100 for the inconvenience its error caused. If this is correct, then Aviva should now pay Mr H further compensation of £300 so that the total compensation paid is £400. But if Aviva hasn't yet paid any compensation to Mr H for the inconvenience its error caused then it should now pay Mr H £400.

I've also set out above why I think that Aviva sent Mr H a wrong valuation on 24 February 2025 as well as on 22 January 2025. I therefore think that Aviva should now send Mr H a correct and up to date retirement pack.

My final decision

My final decision is that I uphold part of Mr H's complaint and Aviva Life & Pensions UK Limited should now compensate Mr H as I've set out above.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr H to accept or reject my decision before 25 November 2025.

Ian Barton
Ombudsman