

## **The complaint**

Mr and Mrs K complain that The Prudential Assurance Company Limited caused a delay and provided poor service when they requested withdrawals from two of their investment bonds. They needed the money for a house purchase, so they say the delay and poor service caused them significant distress.

## **What happened**

Mr and Mrs K held two investment bonds with Prudential. Their financial advisor submitted the withdrawal requests on their behalf on 9 October. Mr and Mrs K received the withdrawal proceeds on 25 October by same day transfer. Following their complaint, Prudential acknowledged that the payments should have been made on 16 October 2024 for one of the bonds, and 17 October 2024 for the other. Some of the mistakes and less than satisfactory service Mr and Mrs K say happened include:

- Sending requests for bank statements needed for verification purposes to the wrong email address.
- Wrongly telling their advisor on 18 October that the payments had been sent and would be received no later than 22 October.
- Wrongly telling them on 23 October that it would intercept the BACS payments and send the money by same day transfer.
- Finding out on 24 October that the payments hadn't been authorised as their bank statement hadn't been accepted for verification purposes.

Mr and Mrs K have also explained that they were frustrated by long call waiting times and the failure of Prudential to escalate to a manager, bearing in mind the significant consequences if the payment was received too late to complete on their house purchase.

Prudential apologised for the poor level of service Mr and Mrs K received. It calculated how much more they would have received if the payments had been made on time and paid this to their account, plus interest. It initially paid them £300 compensation for the distress and inconvenience caused and, on review, paid them a further £250.

Our investigator was satisfied that Prudential had paid Mr and Mrs K the additional sum they would have received if their bonds had been encashed without any delay, plus interest. And she thought £550 was fair and reasonable for the distress and inconvenience Mr and Mrs K had been caused. Prudential told our investigator that it had waived one of the same day transfer fees and the investigator recommended that it reimbursed Mr and Mrs K £42 for the cost of the other. It agreed.

Mr and Mrs K didn't agree with our investigator's conclusion saying that £550 doesn't compensate them for the level of distress Prudential caused because, in summary:

- The actions of Prudential caused them both substantial distress - they suffered sleepless nights; and anxiety during multiple phone calls and emails.
- The payments took twice as long as they should have.

- If the money hadn't been received in time to complete their house purchase, they could have lost their dream house that they'd been saving for in retirement. Or had to pay significant financial penalties.

### **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.

Firstly, I'm aware that I've summarised this complaint in far less detail than the parties and in my own words. There is a considerable amount of information here but I'm not going to respond to every single point made. No discourtesy is intended by this. Instead, I've focussed on what I think are the key issues here. Our rules allow me to do this. This simply reflects the informal nature of our service as a free alternative to the courts. If there's something I've not mentioned, it isn't because I've ignored it. I haven't. I'm satisfied I don't need to comment on every individual argument to be able to reach what I think is the right outcome.

Having considered everything carefully, I have come to the same conclusion as the investigator for the following reasons:

Prudential caused a delay in Mr and Mrs K receiving the bond withdrawal proceeds. During the delay the bonds decreased in value, so Mr and Mrs K received less than they would have done if Prudential hadn't caused a delay. I'm satisfied that Prudential has compensated Mr and Mrs K for this loss by paying them the difference, plus interest at 8% simple per annum, (a payment of £196.91 in November and a payment of £105.16 in December).

If Prudential hadn't caused a delay, the money could have been sent by BACS, at no cost, and received on time. When the payments were eventually made, they were sent by same day transfer to ensure they were received on time. The two same day transfers cost £42 each. Prudential waived one of these charges at the time. I agree with our investigator that both charges should have been waived, so Prudential should reimburse Mr and Mrs K £42.

Mr and Mrs K needed the bond withdrawal proceeds for their house purchase. I fully appreciate a house purchase is a stressful process, even when things run smoothly. And there is no doubt that the delay in making the requested payments, the conflicting information received, and sometimes lack of information received, and the seeming failure of anyone at Prudential to take responsibility when it was clear something had gone wrong, would have been distressing. Mr and Mrs K have told us about the impact this had on them, including sleepless nights. I don't doubt what they've said. And I'm not unsympathetic to what they went through. But in deciding what is fair and reasonable, I have taken into account that, whilst the payment took longer than it should have, it was made in time for them to complete on the house purchase. So, whilst they naturally would have been worried, their house purchase did complete on time and they didn't incur any penalties. Overall, I think the £550 offered by Prudential is fair and reasonable in the circumstances.

Prudential has already credited Mr and Mrs K's account with the financial loss plus interest and with the £550 compensation. So it only remains for it to reimburse them for the one same day transfer fee of £42.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that The Prudential Assurance Company Limited should pay Mr and

Mrs K £42 to reimburse them for one same day transfer fee.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr K and Mrs K to accept or reject my decision before 9 October 2025.

Elizabeth Dawes  
**Ombudsman**