

The complaint

Mr F complains that Utility Warehouse Limited (UW) mis-sold an income protection policy to him.

Any reference to UW includes all its agents.

What happened

Mr F's income protection policy started in December 2013, which was provided alongside his energy account. The policy was designed to provide cover for payments made for utilities in the event that Mr F was unable to work due to injury, illness or unemployment. The policy also provided personal accident and hospitalisation cover.

Mr F made a claim on the policy which was declined by the insurer. Mr F cancelled the policy in April 2025.

He made a complaint to UW that the policy was mis-sold to him and requested a refund of the premiums he'd paid since the start of the policy. UW didn't agree that the policy was mis-sold.

Unhappy, Mr F brought his complaint to this service. Our investigator didn't think the policy had been mis-sold to him or that Mr F had been treated unfairly.

Mr F disagreed and asked for the complaint to be referred to an ombudsman. So, it's been passed to me.

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'm sorry to disappoint Mr F, but I won't be upholding the complaint. I'll explain why.

- Based on what I've seen and heard, this was a non-advised sale. The relevant rules and industry guidelines say that UW needed to ensure that Mr F was given enough information that was clear, fair and not misleading so he could decide if the policy was right for him.
- I've considered the information UW provided to Mr F at the time the policy was taken out and the process it followed. In November 2013, UW sent Mr F a letter providing details of his membership with UW. It informed Mr F of the updated policy; the improvement of the benefits provided on the policy and that the premium reduced from £2.50 to £2.00. The letter informed Mr F that the changes would happen from December 2013, and he had the right to cancel the policy. Contact details on how to do this were provided to Mr F.

- Since the start of the policy in December 2013, Mr F received monthly bills which also included the policy monthly premium and UW's contact details if he had any questions. This meant that Mr F had an opportunity to review the policy and whether it met his needs on a monthly basis.
- Additionally, annual reviews of the policy were provided to Mr F in January of each year and there's evidence from UW that this happened at least between 2021 and 2024. This provided full information about the policy, contact details and Mr F's cancellations rights if he no longer wanted the policy. I note the premiums increased in August 2020 and May 2024 and Mr F was informed of these within the monthly bill statements.
- The policy was self-managed online, so Mr F had the opportunity to review it to see if it met his needs based on his circumstances. He had access to the policy documents as well as the terms and condition of the policy. UW kept him informed of the policy changes and any updates since December 2013 and there's nothing to suggest this information wasn't received by Mr F.
- I think the information provided to Mr F was sufficiently clear, fair and not misleading and in line with the requirements of the sale being non-advised. I appreciate that in hindsight Mr F feels the policy was mis-sold. However, the test here is whether he was given sufficient information that was clear, fair and not misleading.
- Mr F was required to make an informed decision, and I'm satisfied based on the information both parties have provided, Mr F was able to make the choice about whether to take the policy and whether to continue with it over the years since. I'm satisfied overall therefore that the policy wasn't mis-sold to Mr F. It follows that I don't require UW to do anything further.

My final decision

For the reasons given above, I don't uphold Mr F's complaint about Utility Warehouse Limited.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr F to accept or reject my decision before 17 November 2025.

Nimisha Radia
Ombudsman