

The complaint

Mr T complains that Vanguard Asset Management Limited ('Vanguard') delayed transferring his investment ISA to a new provider.

Mr T would now like Vanguard to increase the compensation that they've offered him.

What happened

On 8 January 2025, Mr T requested a full transfer of his Vanguard investment ISA to a business that I shall call Firm H. As the transfer hadn't completed after 30 days, Mr T telephoned Vanguard to find out what was happening. During that discussion, Mr T was informed the transfer had been delayed. So, on 3 February 2025, Mr T formally complained to Vanguard. In summary, he said that he was unhappy with the length of time it was taking them to move his investments to Firm H.

Vanguard moved Mr T's investments to Firm H on 27 February 2025 and a month later, they responded to his complaint. After reviewing Mr T's concerns, Vanguard accepted that they'd delayed moving his investment and offered £75 to apologise.

Mr T was unhappy with Vanguard's response, so he referred his complaint to this service. In summary, he said that he'd not been provided with an explanation from Vanguard about why his monies had been delayed in getting sent to Firm H and asked for the compensation to be increased to £100 to resolve matters.

The complaint was then considered by one of our Investigators. He concluded that Vanguard had accepted that they'd caused a delay but because Mr T's investments were sent to Firm H on an in-specie basis, he'd remained invested throughout the process so hadn't missed out on any market movements. Our Investigator felt that the £75 Vanguard had offered to apologise was fair.

Mr T, however, disagreed with our Investigator's findings and said that having read the guidance on our website about the awards we make, he wanted his complaint referred to an Ombudsman. The case now comes 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.

I have summarised this complaint in less detail than Mr T has done and I've done so using my own words. The purpose of my decision isn't to address every single point raised by all of the parties involved. If there's something I've not mentioned, it isn't because I've ignored it - I haven't. I'm satisfied that I don't need to comment on every individual argument to be able to reach what I think is the right outcome. No discourtesy is intended by this; our rules allow me

to do this and it simply reflects the informal nature of our service as a free alternative to the courts.

My role is to consider the evidence presented by Mr T and Vanguard in order to reach what I think is an independent, fair and reasonable decision based on the facts of the case. In deciding what's fair and reasonable, I must consider the relevant law, regulation and best industry practice. Where there's conflicting information about what happened and gaps in what we know, my role is to weigh up the evidence we do have, but it is for me to decide, based on the available information that I've been given, what's more likely than not to have happened. And, having done so, I'm upholding Mr T's complaint but I'm not going to be asking Vanguard to do anything beyond what they've already offered - I'll explain why below.

HMRC expects firms to move investment ISAs to new providers promptly but no later than 30 days after receiving the consumer's request. But from what I've seen, it took Vanguard an additional three or so weeks to get Mr T's funds to him at Firm H after receiving his request on 8 January 2025. And, it seems to me that Vanguard have already conceded that they took too long in moving Mr T's investments to Firm H.

Using financial services won't always be hassle free and sometimes mistakes occur. But, when they do, we'd ordinarily expect firms to put the consumer back into the same, or as close to the same position that they would've been in were it not for the error. When moving ISAs between providers, there's essentially two ways of doing this, the customer can either sell all their investments and move the funds as cash or, they can undertake what's called an in-specie transfer. In the latter instance, the consumers' investments aren't sold but they're transferred over to the new provider. The benefit being, the customer isn't out of the market at any point. And, from what I've seen, Mr T moved his ISA to Firm H through an in-specie transfer, so he wouldn't have suffered an out of market loss. In addition, Vanguard have said that as Mr T had instructed a transfer, his account wouldn't be subject to the minimum account fee that they'd recently introduced. Therefore, I'm satisfied that Mr T isn't owed any financial compensation relating to the actual ISA transfer itself.

As well as putting right any financial losses in a complaint, we also consider the emotional or practical impact of any errors on a complainant. From what I've seen, Mr T had to contact Vanguard for an update and had to wait three more weeks than necessary. Vanguard have already offered Mr T £75 to apologise, and I'm satisfied that's at a level I would have instructed them to pay him had they not already offered to do so.

In his complaint to this service, Mr T has stated that Vanguard have been 'too vague' in their response to him about why they took so long to move his investment. Whilst I appreciate that he'd like to have more insight around the background, I'm not entirely sure that it would make any difference to the end result. Vanguard have accepted that they took too long to move the ISA, checked if there was a financial impact and apologised. I'm satisfied that outcome is fair and reasonable in all of the circumstances.

My final decision

Vanguard Asset Management Limited have already offered to pay Mr T £75 to settle the complaint, which I'm satisfied is a fair and reasonable outcome in all of the circumstances.

So, my final decision is that Vanguard Asset Management Limited should pay Mr T £75 if they've not already done so.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr T to accept or

reject my decision before 19 December 2025.

Simon Fox
Ombudsman