

Mailing – external stakeholders

The Pensions Ombudsman Annual Report and Accounts published



Our 2016/17 Annual Report and Accounts were published today and can be downloaded from our [website](#).

The report includes information on our operational and financial performance, some summaries of completed cases carried out during the year and highlights the continued rise in pension complaints with pension transfer complaints increasing over the past year.

Anthony Arter, Pensions Ombudsman, said;

“We have had another busy year with a 22% increase in enquiries. This is perhaps a result of the increasing awareness of the value of pensions and the difficulty in understanding whether the rules, and/or legislation, has been applied correctly.

In spite of the increase in the volume of enquiries and accepted investigations, with the introduction of new working practices a higher proportion of investigations are now completed within 6 months – 40% compared with 25% in the previous year.

The past year was a time of consolidating our new approach for the resolution of disputes, 70% of which are now informally resolved. This approach is also aligned with our communication strategy to ensure that the customer journey is further improved. Another strategic development has been our increased focus on stakeholder engagement – in particular with the large public sector schemes, insurance companies and others involved in the pension industry.

By working together pension disputes can be resolved much earlier in the process which can enhance the public's trust in pension saving and in the providers, this is surely what we all want to achieve.”

Our caseload

- We handled over 6,000 enquiries, 22% more than in 2015/16.
- 70% of all enquiries are now received electronically since the launch of our on-line application in April 2016
- We took on 1,333 cases for investigation, slightly less than in 2015/16.
- We completed 1,404 investigations, 7% more than 2015/16.
- 70% of cases were resolved informally by our adjudicators and 30% formally with an Ombudsman's decision.

- 33% of cases formally decided by an Ombudsman were upheld or partly upheld.
- Cases about the actions of the Pension Protection Fund continue to form a small part of our work, with 17 new cases for investigation accepted in the year.
- Pension liberation cases reduced significantly – these account for 8% of new investigations compared to 16% in 2015/6.
- Complaints about transfers (such as the calculation or payment of transfer values) and complaints about overpayment of benefits (usually that the overpaid benefits are being clawed back) have increased.

Our performance

- We completed investigations in an average of 10 months in line with our target.
- A higher proportion of investigations are now completed within 6 months – 40% compared with 25% in 2015/16.
- The average time to complete investigations once they were allocated to Adjudicators was, on average, 3.5 months.
- 42% of completed cases were resolved or the complaint withdrawn, compared to 27% concluded in this way in 2015/16.
- 27% of complaints were ended by a Determination following an Adjudicator's Opinion – a drop from 29% in 2015/6.
- 2% of complaints result in a Determination following an Ombudsman's Preliminary Decision– as far fewer investigations follow this very formal process.

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