

FSCS Podcast #39 Mini-pod: What to prepare before you claim

Jess Spiers 00:01

Welcome to Protect your money with FSCS, the podcast from the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. Today we've got a mini pod for you, a special bite-sized episode where we talk through a particular topic to explain it all simply. In this series, we explain how we can help to protect your money, so you can feel confident your money is safe. Let's get into the conversation now.

Maria Goodall 00:27

Hi, I'm Maria Goodall, one of the Communications and Stakeholder Business Partners here at FSCS. Today, I'm going to be chatting to Helen Gowlett, our Business Change Manager, about what you should prepare before submitting your claim to FSCS to help your application go as smoothly as possible.

We know that it can feel daunting applying directly for potential compensation, but our customer support team are on hand to help you throughout the process. And knowing what to expect and what you need to prepare ahead of submitting your claim should make the process more straightforward.

Welcome, Helen, thank you for taking the time to join us on the Protect your money with FSCS podcast today. Before we get started on preparing your application, would you be able to explain to our listeners what your role FSCS involves?

Helen Gowlett 01:05

Yes, thanks. So, I'm a Business Change Manager, which involves making sure that our processes are efficient and effective, but also making sure that they are customer friendly and provide the right experience for our customers. I spend a lot of my time helping our teams improve our service, but that's always done with customers in mind.

Maria Goodall 01:26

Great, thank you for that. Right, let's talk about how to prepare to submit your claim to FSCS. One very important thing to mention; before you can do anything, you must check that you're eligible to claim compensation under the FSCS compensation rules, which is set by the UK financial services regulators, the Financial Conduct Authority, or the FCA for short, and the Prudential Regulation Authority, the PRA. Our website contains full details of eligibility, you can find out more on our Making a Claim page at www.fscs.org.uk - and that's under the making your claims section.

We can only consider a claim that the financial firm you've done business with has gone bust. If there's a problem and the firm is still trading, try speaking to the firm first or the Financial Ombudsman Service, who deal with complaints against companies that are still in business.

It's also worth saying that if your bank, building society or credit union has failed, you don't need to make a claim, we'll return your money automatically up to the compensation limit. We're a free service if you apply directly through us. So, if you found out that you're eligible to make a claim, you can create an online account to start the claim process and monitor how your application is progressing. Helen can all claims be made online?

Helen Gowlett 02:35

We accept online claims for pensions, investments, mortgages, payment protection insurance, and some other types of insurance. For our online claims, you'll need to scan or take a photo on any smartphone, of any documents relating to your claim and upload them to your application.

Maria Goodall 02:53

Thank you. So are there different types of documents needed for different types of claims, for example, an insurance claim compared to a pension claim?

Helen Gowlett 02:59

Yes, that's right. Each different type of claim will need different documents submitted. There's a full list available on our website, but I'll go through a few categories now and what will need to be prepared. As I explained, you'll see that most of the information that's needed for the various claim types is similar, with details of firms and dates of advice given for example, with some needing a little bit more specific information.

What we're looking for is any proof of advice or where you have paid or received money. If possible, proof of loss will help us calculate the claim. We'll also ask you to provide full details of why you're making a claim, so that we can investigate in the right way based on your specific situation. We will contact you for more information if we need to. We will need quite a bit of information to investigate your claim but you will find it easier to submit your claim if you gather those items first, as you'll be asked to upload them when you start your application.

Where possible, we ask customers to provide all the information, evidence, and documents that they want us to consider when they submit a claim. However, we do understand that it's not always possible to find all the documentation we request and if that's the case, our teams will contact the relevant firms if possible, to see where we can get the information. But if you can get the information ahead of making a claim, and very clearly set out the reasons that the claim is being made, that puts you in the best chance of the claim being processed more quickly.

Maria Goodall 03:05

Great. Maybe we can start with pension advice as it's one of our most common claim types.

Helen Gowlett 04:15

Sure. So, for pensions, the more information we're given, I think the better. We tend to ask for proof that the firm you're claiming against gave you the advice. So that would need to include the firm's name, be dated at the time the advice was given, it should refer to the specific pension recommendation that was made. If customers don't have that, then a letter from the pension provider confirming who gave the advice should be sufficient.

Secondly, any transaction history: this should show the amounts and dates of all contributions and withdrawals from your pension, including any charges applied. It should also show all the investments or investment funds purchased since the pension was set up, and any proof of loss you may have made.

Maria Goodall 05:13

Great, that makes sense. Should we talk about general insurance next?

Helen Gowlett 05:17

Yes. So, by general insurance, we mean everything from life insurance to pet insurance to motor insurance, there's a full list of those insurance products on the website. For these we need see the policy document including full terms and conditions, documentation of any claims that have been made against the policy that should show details of the claim, including the dates and any amounts received or still outstanding, proof of any premiums paid, so that might be a one-off payment or regular premiums.

So, something showing those which could be a letter from the insurance or the loan provider confirming the dates of those payments, including any that have been missed. And finally, proof that the firm gave the advice so that should have the firm's name and be dated at the time the advice was given or the insurance policy was bought. If that's not available, then a letter from the policy provider confirming the name of the firm will be sufficient.

Maria Goodall 06:17

Thanks, Helen. As mentioned, if our customers have any questions or aren't sure about what should be provided, they can visit our website or get in touch with our customer support team. So next up is investments.

Helen Gowlett 06:28

Okay, so for an investment, we would be looking for the current value, or details of the amount that was received from the investment. If it's still being paid, then the value we'd want to see dated within the last month. Otherwise, we need the surrender or maturity value, which is the amount that firm would pay at that point in time on your investment. We'd need some sort of proof that the firm you're claiming against gave the advice.

So, similar to what I've said before, it needs to show the firm's name, be dated at the time, and refer to the investment that you're claiming against. Again, if you can't get it, a letter from the

investment provider confirming who the firm was would help. Finally on that one, a history of transactions. So that's going to show the amounts and dates of all investments and withdrawals, including any charges applied.

Maria Goodall 07:22

Lastly, should we look at mortgage advice?

Helen Gowlett 07:25

There's a lot of different types of mortgages. So, depending on the type, we might ask for slightly different documentation and detail. But the main documents we'd ask for are a completion statement, which would show the date the mortgage completed and include details of the mortgage, a solicitor should be able to get a copy for that, if that's not available to you.

We'd want to see the mortgage application form, so that should be a copy of the original application from the time of advice. We'd also ask for the mortgage offer document showing the details of the mortgage, things like the start date, the rates that are applied, the amount borrowed, the length of the mortgage. And again, as with all the others that we've talked about, proof of the firm that gave the advice, so something showing the firm's name, be dated at the time the advice was given or when the mortgage started, referring to that specific mortgage or to any additional products which the firm advised on. But again, if you're not able to get that, the mortgage provider can confirm that in a letter.

Maria Goodall 08:36

Thank you so much for running through those, Helen, that that was really useful. Is there anything else you wanted to add?

Helen Gowlett 08:40

Nothing particularly that there was missing there. But more to say that we know some of these products would have been taken out quite some time ago. And customers don't always have the documentation that they need to support and prove their claim to hand. Actually, most of the documents will be available from the provider (the product provider) and they are obliged to release the information to you as their customer.

So if you're going to go online and make your claim, I'd visit the page on the website first. That will detail exactly what you need, but on that page, there's also some letter templates that you can fill out and send to your provider asking for any of the documents or information that might be missing.

Maria Goodall 09:24

Thanks, Helen, that's really worth knowing. Thank you so much for taking the time to talk to us today.

Helen Gowlett 09:29

Thank you!

Maria Goodall 09:30

As we both mentioned, the website is full of more useful information, visit www.fscs.org.uk. Or you can contact our customer support team on 0800-678-1100, and that's Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm. You can find all our podcasts on our website or wherever you listen to podcasts. Give us follow and you won't miss an episode. Thank you for listening!