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IFA warns of change to N&P's service after transfer to Aviva

By Aamina Zafar

Customers who previously received financial advice from Norwich and Peterborough will end up with restricted service once its advisers transfer to Aviva, according to an IFA.

James Harrison, IFA consultant for Norwich-based Almary Green, warned N&P customers that the society's move to transfer advisers to Aviva means that the service they have relied upon to make important financial decisions will change significantly.

He highlighted that although advisers will continue to operate within N&P branches, they will no longer be able to offer independent advice and will be restricted to recommending Aviva products.

He said: "N&P customers will no longer be offered access to independent advice. It is understood that letters have gone out to all their existing customers saying that only will their existing adviser no longer be able to give them impartial advice, but he or she will also not be able to help them find that advice elsewhere."

The N&P letter says they can search for an IFA by logging onto online IFA promotion group Unbiased's website.

It read: "The financial services regulator is changing the way companies offer and charge for certain financial advice and we expect offering independent financial advice will become more difficult and expensive for companies.

"As your financial planner will no longer be directly working with N&P and will no longer be an IFA, they will not be able to advise you on the performance of any existing instruments you hold, unless these investments are provided by Aviva."

An N&P spokesman said: "It is nonsense to suggest that we are letting our customers down. The changes being brought about by RDR meant that we had to review how we provide them with advice, and continuing being an IFA wasn't a viable option.

"It is important to continue giving our customers access to financial advice, rather than the alternative, which was not giving them any access at all in our branches. Aviva has a great understanding of what our customers are likely to want and need."

Earlier this month, Colin Parkin, director of Lincolnshire based Ample Financial Services, said he had calls from N&P's advisers who are hunting for jobs after N&P agreed to transfer its branch-based advisers over to Aviva.

This year, chief executive Matthew Bullock, 61, announced his retirement after 12 years at the helm of the society. He said earlier this year that problems with Keydata and Lifemark had 'dominated' N&P over the past 12 months.

The news follows reports that consultancy KPMG, which is the Lifemark administrator, has secured a three-month stay of execution for the fund. It will now run until 15 May.