

The complaint

Mrs C and Mr L's complaint is about a claim they made on their AWP P&C SA ("AWP") travel insurance policy, which was declined.

Mrs C and Mr L feel that AWP have treated them unfairly in declining their claim and for the way in which they handled it.

What happened

Mrs C and Mr L had a trip booked to Bruges by Eurostar. On the day of travel, they encountered major disruption to the public transport train they intended to take to get to the departure point. They say they tried alternative means to get to their departure point in time but were unsuccessful. As such they had to cancel their trip.

AWP considered Mrs C and Mr L's claim for reimbursement of the losses they'd incurred but declined to cover them. They said the policy didn't provide cover for cancellation in the circumstances made. Unhappy with this and the time AWP took to consider their claim, Mrs C and Mr L referred their complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service.

Our investigator considered their complaint. She asked AWP whether they'd considered the claim under the travel delay section of the policy. AWP replied to say there was no cover for this sort of claim under that section either, but they were prepared to offer Mrs C and Mr L £50 in compensation for the inconvenience experienced in dealing with their claim.

Our investigator then considered everything as a whole. She concluded there was no cover at all for the circumstances Mrs C and Mr L were claiming for. She also thought the sum of £50 was adequate compensation for the time AWP took to consider their claim and the way in which they'd handled it.

Mrs C and Mr L have accepted the investigator's view in relation to the claim but they feel the offer of compensation is too low and doesn't adequately reflect the stress and inconvenience they've suffered. Because of this, the matter has been referred to me to decide.

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 don't uphold Mrs C and Mrs L's complaint. I'll explain why.

Although Mrs C and Mr L have accepted the investigator's view on the claim itself, I have reviewed the policy terms myself and agree that there is no cover for the type of claim they've made. Whilst the policy does cover cancellation, this is only in circumstances where their travel carrier (i.e. Eurostar) can't get them to their original itinerary's destination. And travel carrier doesn't mean local public transportation- that's defined separately within the policy. In addition, the travel delay section of the policy doesn't encompass the sort of

situation Mrs C and Mr L were claiming for- and neither does any other section of the policy.

So, I've gone on to think about the handling of the claim more generally by AWP. Mrs C and Mr L have made some detailed submissions about the distress they were caused in this complaint. They've talked about the disappointment they suffered about not being reimbursed for something they thought they had paid additional premiums to be covered for, the financial loss that has placed a burden on them, the loss of expectation that they couldn't go on what was an important trip for Mr L as well as the stress this caused them given their age and circumstances. They feel that AWP unreasonably delayed considering their claim. I've thought about this as well as the sum AWP have offered them and although my view will be disappointing for Mrs C and Mr L, I don't think this amount should be increased.

I know that the fact that Mrs C and Mr L weren't covered for this claim was very upsetting for them given the importance of the trip and the cost of it. But I don't think AWP were wrong to turn down cover so I can't say they're responsible for this. AWP took just under eight weeks to give an answer on the claim. This time frame took into account referring the matter to a senior manager to determine whether cover could be offered. Whilst I know this might have felt like a long time to wait, I agree with the investigator that it wasn't exceptionally long in the circumstances. I know that Mr L was frustrated by having to send in documents he'd already submitted but taking this into account together with the time AWP took to provide an answer on the claim, I think the payment of £50 is adequate compensation in the circumstances.

If Mrs C and Mr L haven't already received the sum of £50 from AWP and still want to, they should contact them directly.

My final decision

For the reasons set out above, I don't uphold Mrs C and Mr L's complaint against AWP P&C SA.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs C and Mr L to accept or reject my decision before 23 November 2023.

Lale Hussein-Venn
Ombudsman