

The complaint

Mrs A has complained that AXA PPP Healthcare Limited ('AXA') has continued to make mistakes and failed to pay the sums promised.

What happened

Mrs A made a claim under her private medical insurance policy, underwritten by AXA.

Following an earlier complaint (which has been investigated separately), AXA promised to pay her specialist's fees in full, even though he was fee limited. But when the invoices were sent to AXA, it incorrectly told Mrs A that the fees wouldn't be paid in full and she would need to pay the shortfall.

Mrs A complained and AXA apologised for its errors. It confirmed it would pay the specialist as agreed and also paid £200 compensation to Mrs A for the distress and inconvenience caused to her. Mrs A remained unhappy and referred her complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service.

Our investigator looked into the complaint and found that AXA's resolution to the complaint was fair and appropriate.

But Mrs A disagreed and so the case has been passed to me for a final 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.

Having done so, I think AXA's offer to resolve the complaint is fair. I'll explain why.

- The relevant rules and industry guidelines say an insurer should handle claims promptly and fairly. And shouldn't unreasonably reject a claim.
- This decision relates solely to the invoices which weren't correctly paid for Mrs A's treatment despite AXA promising to cover the specialist's fees in full.
- AXA has accepted it made an error. It has explained it had added notes to its system but these were missed due to human error. It has confirmed it has provided feedback to the managers of the team members involved. And has apologised and paid £200 compensation.
- Mrs A wants AXA to put measures in place to prevent mistakes and errors happening. Apart from what AXA has already outlined, I'm not sure what more it can do. Mistakes do happen when human intervention is involved and when that happens, I have to consider whether the remedy provided is appropriate.
- In this case, AXA apologised and rectified the mistake as soon as Mrs A complained.

Ideally, the mistakes shouldn't have been made but it isn't always possible to avoid errors. I agree more care should be taken and repeat errors are frustrating. For that, compensation for the impact of the distress, inconvenience and frustration is the most appropriate remedy. That is because it is not my role to punish AXA. I am considering the impact of the two invoices which were paid incorrectly and as the matter was corrected and resolved quite quickly, I think an award of £200 is fair and reasonable in the circumstances. So I won't be asking AXA to do anything more.

My final decision

For the reasons set out above, I think AXA's payment of £200 compensation for processing the specialist's invoices incorrectly is fair and reasonable. It also rectified the error as I would expect. So it doesn't need to do anything further.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs A to accept or reject my decision before 1 December 2023.

Shamaila Hussain
Ombudsman