

## **The complaint**

Mr H complains that First Central Insurance Management Limited (First Central) requested information relating to his claims history in error, under his motor insurance policy.

## **What happened**

Mr H took out a motor insurance policy with First Central acting as administrator. Once the policy was set up it contacted him to ask for proof of his claims history, which he provided. But it didn't accept the format in which the information had been provided by his previous insurer.

During a phone call with First Central's agent, Mr H says he was lied to. He says it was subsequently discovered that First Central had made a mistake. This meant the request for information wasn't necessary. He says he spent a great deal of time trying to sort this out.

Mr H asks that First Central refunds his premium and leaves his cover in place. He asks for an apology from a director, for the agents involved to undergo training, and to be compensated for the distress and inconvenience.

In its final complaint response First Central says the data from the Claims and Underwriting Exchange (CUE) database was incorrectly transferred. This was the reason for the error. It thanked Mr H for still providing the requested documents to validate his policy. It also paid him £150 compensation for the poor service he'd received.

Mr H didn't think he'd been treated fairly and referred the matter to our service. Our investigator didn't uphold his complaint. He agreed that First Central's mistake had caused Mr H inconvenience and frustration. But he thought its payment of £150 compensation was fair.

Mr H disagreed and asked for an ombudsman to consider the matter.

It has been passed 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'm not upholding this complaint. I don't doubt that this matter has been frustrating and caused Mr H inconvenience. This is as a result of a mistake on First Central's part. But I'm satisfied that it's done enough to put things right. Let me explain.

I can see that First Central contacted Mr H to request proof of his claim's history in March 2023. It explained that some of his policy details may need amending.

I've listened to the call recordings the business provided between Mr H and one of its complaint handlers. It's apparent from these calls that First Central's agent(s) had made a

mistake. This happened when reviewing the CUE data relating to the non-fault accident Mr H had been involved in. During this call the complaint handler makes clear that there was no need for First Central to have requested the information it did.

During these calls First Central's agent tells Mr H that the premium increase has now been reversed. He says this was only added due to its error when it thought Mr H was at fault for the accident he'd declared. The agent says he'd listened to a call between Mr H and another agent regarding this point. He agreed with Mr H that the previous agent handled the call poorly. He says she put the call on hold more than once, which was unnecessary. Also, that she spoke over Mr H, hadn't checked to see if a manager was able to speak to him, and made comments about changing the format of the document Mr H had provided, which wasn't something that needed to happen.

The complaint handler agreed with Mr H that it was strange that First Central's agent had put the call on hold to review the emailed information he'd sent. But later in the same call she'd said this information hadn't been provided. I can understand why Mr H found this frustrating.

From listening to these calls, I note Mr H was initially offered £50 compensation. The matter was escalated when he didn't accept this. The compensation amount was later increased to £150, which was confirmed in First Central's final complaint response.

Based on this evidence there was no requirement for First Central to request any information from Mr H once his policy had been put in force. The request for information was made in error. This meant Mr H had to contact his previous insurer to obtain proof he wasn't at fault for the accident. He then spent more time in calls with agents at First Central who were unhelpful. In these circumstances it's appropriate that First Central compensates Mr H to apologise for the frustration and inconvenience it caused him. But I think £150 is fair, so I can't reasonably ask it to pay more.

I acknowledge Mr H's request to have his policy premium refunded and for his cover to remain in force. However, he's benefitted from having cover in place, which he's required to pay for as per the terms of his policy. I'm satisfied the compensation payment adequately redresses the problems he encountered.

Similarly, although I acknowledge Mr H's request that First Central's agents should undergo training, and that a director should provide an apology, this isn't something I can require. We're not the regulator and can't tell First Central how it should run its business. Our role is to determine a fair and reasonable outcome to Mr H's complaint. I'm satisfied that the payment of compensation is sufficient in these circumstances.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that I do not uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr H to accept or reject my decision before 12 January 2024.

Mike Waldron  
**Ombudsman**