

The complaint

Mr C has complained about The National Farmers' Union Mutual Insurance Society Limited (NFU). He isn't happy it chose not to offer the chance to renew the insurance policies he held with it.

Mr C's representative has advanced his complaint but for ease I'll refer to him throughout.

What happened

Mr C advanced a claim through his insurance policy, but the relationship with his insurer broke down. Mr C told NFU that he didn't want to renew his insurance policy with it. And at a later stage NFU told Mr C that it wouldn't offer to renew his policy at the time of renewal or any of the other products it held for him.

As Mr C isn't happy about this and feels NFU was being malicious when it chose to do this he complained to NFU and then this Service. This was because Mr C feels obliged to tell future insurers that he has had insurance cancelled.

Our investigator looked into things for Mr C but didn't uphold his complaint. He explained that NFU was entitled to decide who it would and wouldn't insure so he didn't think it had done anything wrong. And as Mr C's policy wasn't cancelled or refused, as he hadn't applied to renew his insurance with NFU, he didn't need to tell his future insurers about this.

As Mr C didn't agree the matter has been passed to me for review.

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.

Although I can understand Mr C's position and frustration I'm not upholding his complaint. I'll explain why.

As Mr C has explained he didn't want to renew his policy with NFU, so he had already chosen to take out insurance elsewhere before NFU went on to say it wasn't likely to offer renewal. So, I think it's clear that Mr C didn't want to renew his insurance with NFU, and had told NFU this, as there had been a breakdown in the relationship between the two. As such I think it is clear NFU didn't refuse to insure Mr C – indeed it continued with his policy that he had in place until renewal - and Mr C had already expressed his view that he wasn't going to renew with NFU so it was clearly Mr C who chose not to take out insurance with NFU in the first instance.

Given this, and the fact that NFU hasn't recorded any cancellation markers against Mr C I think it is clear that his policy wasn't cancelled (as cover continued) and he wasn't refused insurance by NFU as he didn't apply and had already said that he was taking his business elsewhere. As such he wouldn't need to say he had a policy cancelled or refused in any future insurance application as this clearly wouldn't be correct. So, although Mr C feels that

he would need to tell future insurers that he has had an insurance policy cancelled or an insurer had refused to cover him it is clear that isn't the case.

I know Mr C feels that NFU has acted maliciously here but I haven't seen any evidence of this. It has simply made a commercial decision not to offer renewal as the relationship between the parties had broken down. This Service can't tell a business what decisions it can and can't take and who it can insure. It is simply a commercial decision here given the breakdown in relationships between the parties – which was the very reason Mr C had chosen not to renew with NFU as well. And I can't punish NFU for making this decision as Mr C would like.

My final decision

It follows, for the reasons given above, that I'm not upholding this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr C to accept or reject my decision before 9 October 2023.

Colin Keegan
Ombudsman