

The complaint

Mr S complains about the value Admiral Insurance (Gibraltar) Limited ("Admiral") gave him for his car following a claim under his motor insurance policy.

What happened

Mr S had a motor insurance policy with Admiral covering his car.

In December 2022 his car was damaged in a collision which was the fault of a third party.

Admiral assessed his car as being beyond economic repair. It said it would declare it a write-off and assessed its market value as £2,950.

Mr S didn't agree with this valuation, and he complained about it and Admiral's service during his claim. He said he wasn't given a hire car and that Admiral's communication and processes during his claim were poor. Admiral said it would pay £320 for the loss of use of his car, and £150 for his trouble and upset caused by its claims handling.

Admiral said it'd used trade guides to arrive at a value for the car and it had offered Mr S the highest value from the trade guides it used, which were:

Company A: £2,950

Company B: £2,305

It said it wouldn't increase this amount.

Mr S remained unhappy with Admiral's valuation and brought his complaint to this service.

Our investigator looked into his complaint and didn't uphold it. He looked at the trade guides and said the amount offered by Admiral was in line with the approach taken by this service. He also said he thought Admiral's offer of £150 for his trouble and upset and £320 for loss of use were fair and reasonable.

Mr S didn't agree with the view. He points out that he isn't able to buy a replacement car for Admiral's valuation.

He asked for her complaint to be reviewed by an ombudsman, so it 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 read the file of evidence, I'm not going to uphold this complaint and I'll explain why.

I've said above about how Admiral arrived at the valuation of Mr S's car.

Its approach fits with this service's approach to car valuations. We don't provide valuations for vehicles, but look to whether the insurer's offer is reasonable.

I've done research into Mr S's car and I've found these values, provided by different trade guides, for the month his car was damaged, which are based on a vehicle with the same specification and mileage:

Company A: £2,975

Company B: £2,305

Company C: £2,584

I've looked at Admiral's valuation of his car and I can see it has offered him a value at the higher end of the three listed above.

In its evidence it says there is a limited amount of evidence for these cars in the market, which is why it offered this higher amount.

I asked Mr S to send in more evidence about his car and why he thought it should be valued higher, but he didn't respond to my requests.

Without further evidence, I think Admiral's offer of £2,950 for his car, plus £320 for his loss of use and £150 compensation for his distress and inconvenience, and the approach it has taken, is fair and reasonable.

My final decision

Admiral Insurance (Gibraltar) Limited has already made an offer to settle the complaint and I think this offer is fair in all the circumstances.

So my decision is that Admiral Insurance (Gibraltar) Limited should pay Mr S (if it hasn't already done so):

- £2,950 for his car (subject to any excess or policy terms).
- £320 for his loss of use.
- £150 compensation for his distress and inconvenience.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr S to accept or reject my decision before 16 October 2023.

Richard Sowden
Ombudsman