

The complaint

Ms C complains about how esure Insurance Limited handled a claim made on her motor insurance policy and the amount of compensation it has offered for this.

What happened

Ms C notified esure of an accident and esure initially thought her car was beyond economical repair. However, after assessment, it said the car was repairable. It took esure seven weeks to arrange for the car to be taken for repair and Ms C was without transport in this time. She said she called, emailed and tried to contact esure online for updates without success. esure agreed its service could have been better. It reimbursed Ms C's transport costs, the cost of removing her dashcam, and it offered her £150 compensation. But Ms C remained unhappy. She thought esure should pay her £700 compensation.

Our Investigator recommended that the complaint should be upheld. She thought esure should have provided Ms C with a courtesy car two days after her car was deemed repairable. She thought it hadn't kept Ms C updated about her claim. She thought its claim handling should have been better and it had caused long delays. And so she thought esure should increase its offer of compensation to £300.

esure replied that it had reimbursed Ms C's transport costs and the cost of removing her camera and sensor. It said it thought £150 was sufficient compensation for the amount of inconvenience caused.

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.

Ms C has explained that whilst she's happy with the refund of her transport costs and the cost of removing her camera and sensor, she feels that the level of compensation offered by esure isn't sufficient for the stress and frustration caused. I can see that she was frustrated by delays in the claim, esure's errors, and its lack of updates and responses to her communication.

When a business makes a mistake, as esure accepts it has done here, we expect it to restore the consumer's position, as far as it's able to do so. And we also consider the impact the error had on the consumer.

esure is obliged by the rules that govern it to deal with claims promptly and fairly. There was an initial delay in the claim until esure assessed the car and declared it to be repairable. But this was over the holiday period, so I can't say that this was avoidable.

But it then took esure's repairer seven weeks to take the car in for repairs. esure said it had overlooked the booking. But I think esure should have been more proactive in chasing this up, and in responding to Ms C's requests for updates. And when the car was booked in, there was a further week's delay because a courtesy car wasn't then available.

I can see that Ms C was entitled by her policy's terms and conditions to a courtesy car while her car was being repaired by the approved repairer. And I can see that esure should have provided this within two working days. Ms C didn't drive her own car because she'd been

told that it needed repair. As I'm satisfied that esure was responsible for the avoidable delay in taking the car for repairs, I think it should reasonably compensate Ms C for the loss of use this delay caused.

Ms C said that during this period she tried to contact esure by phone without success. She tried email, and she received acknowledgements that said esure would reply within four days. But it didn't do this. And she tried online chat to see what was happening with her repairs, but this service wasn't available. During this time I can see that Ms C was uncertain what was happening with her claim and her car's repairs.

esure agreed to refund Ms C's receipts for taxis and other transport costs and to reimburse her for removing her camera and sensor. This means that Ms C wasn't out of pocket due to esure's errors, and I think that reasonably restored her position.

But I'm not satisfied that esure's offer of £150 compensation for the impact of its errors is sufficient in the circumstances for the following reasons:

- Ms C had the inconvenience of having to book alternative transport and didn't have the convenience of her own or a courtesy car due to esure's delays in arranging repairs.
- I think she was also caused considerable stress and frustration by esure's lack of updates and lack of responses to her communication over a matter of months.
- esure had recorded incorrect contact details for the other driver. But it didn't check these with Ms C causing a delay in the claim.

Our Investigator recommended that esure should increase its offer of compensation to £300. I think that's in keeping with our published guidance for the level of impact esure's errors had on Ms C. And so I think that's fair and reasonable.

Putting things right

I require esure Insurance Limited to pay Ms C £300 compensation (in total) for the distress and inconvenience caused by its level of service.

My final decision

For the reasons given above, my final decision is that I uphold this complaint. I require esure Insurance Limited to carry out the redress set out above.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Ms C to accept or reject my decision before 10 February 2023.

Phillip Berechree
Ombudsman