

The complaint

Mr M complains that AWP P&C SA turned down his travel insurance claim.

What happened

Mr M holds travel insurance cover through AWP. He made a claim for personal possessions and money after he was robbed abroad.

AWP turned down the claim because the police report said Mr M's home address was in the country where the robbery happened. Unhappy with this, Mr M brought a complaint to this service.

Our investigator recommended the complaint be upheld. He thought Mr M had provided a reasonable explanation for the police report stating he lived in that country, and was satisfied that Mr M lives in the UK. The investigator recommended that AWP pay the claim, plus interest. He also recommended AWP pay Mr M £150 compensation for the delay in making a claims decision.

AWP didn't respond to our investigator's recommendations, and so the matter has been passed to me for a 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.

The policy explains that cover is only available for residents of the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man. The policy provides cover for loss of personal possessions and personal money (subject to policy limits).

AWP turned down the claim because the police report completed by Mr M stated that he was residing at an address in the country where the robbery happened. The report also asked for his residential address, and Mr M gave the same address.

Mr M says the robbery happened outside the address where he was staying whilst on his trip, and he thought the police report was asking him about that location.

AWP hasn't provided any evidence (apart from the police report) to support its view that Mr M isn't a UK resident. If it had concerns about this, it could have easily asked Mr M for evidence that he lived in the UK, but it doesn't appear to have done so.

As our investigator has said, Mr M has provided a flight booking invoice which shows he was only in that country for a few weeks. I also note that Mr M has provided receipts of the items claimed for, and these were purchased in the UK before he started his trip. He also purchased his travel money in the UK ahead of his trip. Finally, Mr M has also provided his most recent council tax bill which shows he currently lives in the UK. This evidence all supports that Mr M is a UK resident.

On balance, I'm satisfied Mr M has shown he was only visiting the country where the robbery happened, and he's given a reasonable explanation for the police report including the wrong home address. I note that Mr M reported the theft to the police within 24 hours, as required by the policy. So I find that AWP should pay the claim.

Mr M made the claim in May 2022, but a claims decision was not made until November 2022. Although AWP apologised for the delay, I agree with our investigator that it should pay Mr M £150 compensation to recognise the inconvenience caused by the length of time taken to make a claims decision.

My final decision

My final decision is that I uphold this complaint. I require AWP P&C SA to pay the claim subject to the remaining policy terms. Interest* should be added at the rate of 8% simple per annum from the date of claim to the date of settlement.

AWP should also pay Mr M £150 compensation.

* If AWP considers that it's required by HM Revenue & Customs to take off income tax from that interest, it should tell Mr M how much it has taken off. It should also give Mr M a certificate showing this if he asks for one, so he can reclaim the tax from HM Revenue & Customs if appropriate.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr M to accept or reject my decision before 14 April 2023.

Chantelle Hurn-Ryan
Ombudsman