

The complaint

Mrs R has complained that U K Insurance Limited trading as Direct Line produced misleading documentation. She has also complained that it didn't change an email address when asked to do so.

What happened

The background to this matter is not in dispute. In summary Mrs R complained that her policy document didn't clearly mention interest charges. She had also tried to change an email address but had not been able to do so.

Our investigator didn't find that Direct Line had done anything wrong.

As no agreement has been reached the matter has been passed to me to determine.

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, and although I recognise the Mrs R will be disappointed by my response, I agree with the conclusions reached by our investigator. I'll explain why below. Firstly though, I'm aware I've summarised the background to this complaint. No discourtesy is intended by this. Instead, I've focused on what I find are the key issues here. Our rules allow me to take this approach. It simply reflects the informal nature of our service as a free alternative to the courts.

- Mrs R had agreed to pay for her landlord's policy by instalments. But she didn't realise that this would mean that interest would be charged to her premium payments. I can understand her confusion – as during the first year this charge is waived. Additionally she was sent correspondence by both email and post. Direct Line says that Mrs R had elected email as her contact preference, but I appreciate information was being emailed and sent by post may have meant documents could be missed. Nevertheless it is clear that Mrs R was sent the direct debit schedule of payments before the renewal date which did show that interest would be charged.
- I understand Mrs R felt that correspondence sent was unclear – in particular as the interest charge appeared on the second page of one document. I've considered this document with care. 'Important Change' is in bold near the top of page two and explains the interest charge. *But it also says If you would like to renew your policy in a single payment you can do so by calling us on* (number given). I don't consider the information was buried or that the documentation was otherwise unclear or misleading.
- Direct Line agreed Mrs R could pay in full when she called to query the interest charge this some weeks after the policy renewed, but it wouldn't refund the interest she had paid on the instalments to date. I don't find this was unfair. Having listened

to the calls Mrs R had with Direct Line I can hear she was very unhappy generally and ultimately cancelled her policy. In all the circumstances though I don't find that Direct Line did anything wrong. I'm satisfied she was advised that there was a charge for credit.

- During one of the calls Mrs R also asked Direct Line to change an email address. However it said it was unable to do so as the email she wished to change was registered to another policy. This was explained to Mrs R and I don't find the explanation was unreasonable.
- In all the circumstances I don't find that Direct Line treated Mrs R unfairly, unreasonably or contrary to her policy terms.

My final decision

My final decision is that I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs R to accept or reject my decision before 1 April 2024.

Lindsey Woloski
Ombudsman