

The complaint

Miss C is complaining Red Sands Insurance Company (Europe) Limited declined a claim she made on a cosmetic repair policy.

What happened

In February 2022 Miss C bought a car and at the same time took out a cosmetic repair policy. The policy covers Miss C for minor damage to her car. Around December 2023 Miss C contacted Red Sands to claim for a dent to her rear bumper. However, Red Sands declined the claim as it said there were various areas of damage to the bumper and it wouldn't be possible to complete a cosmetic repair.

Our investigator didn't uphold this complaint. He said Red Sands had provided him a report from the repairer who physically inspected Miss C's car which set out that the bumper has been misaligned due to the dent and requires removal to facilitate the repair.

Miss C disagreed the bumper was misaligned and said there was nothing to show this.

As Miss C didn't agree with the investigator, the complaint's been passed to me to decide.

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.

I've decided to not uphold this complaint and I'll now explain why.

The purpose of the policy Miss C took out is to cover minor repairs which are able to be repaired swiftly and without a requirement of using a body shop. And it covers minor damage. Miss C was looking for Red Sands to repair a dent to her bumper. The policy says it covers the following:

“Minor Dent: means a dented area on the Vehicle up to a maximum of 30cm in diameter, where the panel has not been ripped, perforated, torn or damaged the structure/alignment of the panel(s) and can be repaired using Minor Cosmetic Damage Repair techniques.”

Further to this, the policy also contains the following exclusion:

“You are not covered for any costs in excess of £250 (including VAT) following an Authorised Claim requiring a conventional Bodyshop Repair as a Minor Cosmetic Damage Repair could not be facilitated”.

Red Sands has provided a statement from the engineer who inspected the vehicle who said:

“main dent claimed for is deeper than 3mm and has pushed out the top of bumper, bumper require removal for repair as no way of pushing dent out as is against the rear reinforcement bar,”

On balance I'm satisfied that the damage can't be repaired using Minor Cosmetic Damage Repair techniques. So I don't think it was unfair for Red Sands to say the damage isn't one that is covered under the terms of the policy. It follows, therefore, that I don't think it acted unfairly in declining the claim.

My final decision

For the reasons I've set out above, it's my final decision that I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Miss C to accept or reject my decision before 25 July 2024.

Guy Mitchell

Ombudsman