

## **The complaint**

Mr P has complained about the valuation esure Insurance Limited trading as Sheilas' wheels paid for his car when it settled his claim under his car insurance policy.

## **What happened**

Mr P made a claim to his insurer esure following an incident where his car was damaged beyond economical repair.

esure paid a total loss settlement, based on the market value of Mr P's car at the time of loss.

Mr P said it wasn't enough to replace his car with a similar one.

Our Investigator didn't recommend the complaint should be upheld. He thought esure had acted reasonably.

Mr P didn't agree and so the case has 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.

We don't decide a valuation. But we look at whether an insurer has reached its valuation reasonably and in line with the policy.

Mr P's policy – like most standard motor insurance policies – says the most esure will pay in the event of a claim is the market value of his car at the time of loss.

When looking at valuation complaints, we have a long standing approach. We look at the main motor trade guides as they provide valuations based on data for the likely selling price of a car of the same make, model, age, mileage and condition as Mr P's. We find advertised prices can vary widely and tend to be less reliable as they are a starting price – and don't necessarily give a good guide as to the actual final selling price of vehicles.

We checked the trade guides esure relied on when deciding a valuation for Mr P's car to see what the 'retail transacted' amount was. The guides ranged between £6,230 and £7,903. esure paid Mr P the higher of the guides at £7,903. So I think esure dealt with Mr P's claim reasonably.

Our Investigator provided Mr P with a link to show that adverts for a car similar to his varied widely from £6,595 to £8,495. In response, Mr P says his car was a more popular colour and had recently had the cam belt changed. He said the car examples were older than his.

The adverts provided by the Investigator include four cars of the same age as Mr P's according to the registration plate with similar mileage. So I'm satisfied we have properly checked the advertised prices for a car similar to Mr P's.

The guides produce valuations based on a vehicle in good condition, which is the condition we and esure based the valuation for Mr P's car on. Any maintenance works to keep a car in good condition has therefore been taken into account in the valuation settlement.

I've looked at the adverts Mr P provided, but they are predominantly for cars younger than his and with lower mileage.

So based on all of the available information, I don't think esure has done anything wrong. This means I'm not asking esure to pay any more.

### **My final decision**

I'm sorry to disappoint Mr P. But for the reasons I've given above, my final decision is that I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr P to accept or reject my decision before 2 September 2024.

Geraldine Newbold  
**Ombudsman**