

## **The complaint**

Mr I and Mrs I have complained about delays by AXA Insurance UK Plc in settling a claim made under their home insurance policy.

## **What happened**

The background to this complaint isn't in dispute. In summary Mr and Mrs I made a claim following a flood at the property in July 2021. There were multiple inspections of their property and during these inspections part of their parquet floor was damaged.

Ultimately a settlement offer was accepted but there was an ongoing issue regarding the level of damp in the property and the work required to the damp proof course and membrane. Mr and Mrs I provided quotes for the work to AXA. They required the drying and reinstatement work to be completed.

Very unhappy at the slow progress of their claim Mr and Mrs I raised a complaint in June 2023. AXA responded in November 2023. AXA accepted that there had been delays and communication issues during the course of the claim and in November 2023 offered £500 in compensation.

Mr and Mrs I remained unhappy with this offer of compensation and referred the matter to our service. Our investigator recommended that the complaint be upheld. He felt that the compensation offered was low and recommended an increase to £800. He also said that AXA should agree to repair the parquet floor during the reinstatement works or compensate Mr and Mrs I directly for the floor. AXA agreed but Mr and Mrs I didn't. They requested £5000 in compensation.

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.

I've summarised the background to this complaint - no discourtesy is intended by this. Instead, I've focused on what I find is the key issue 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.

If there's something I haven't mentioned, it isn't because I've ignored it. I've reviewed the file and considered the representations Mr I has made with care. In this decision I have considered the actions of AXA until November 2023 only.

Having done so I agree with the conclusions reached by our investigator. I'll explain why.

It is accepted that from July 2021 to November 2023 there were delays by AXA and its agents in progressing the claim. This is a very lengthy period of time for a claim to be ongoing. In claims of this type unknown factors will cause delay – such as the issues with

the damp proof course. Additionally, when quotes are required these inevitably take time to be prepared and considered. But AXA has a regulatory duty to handle claims promptly and fairly. I'm not persuaded it did so.

I fully accept the impact that this ongoing matter had on Mr and Mrs I. It is clear from the timeline provided that they were trying move the claim forward, sometimes their requests and correspondence went unanswered. Mr and Mrs I had to put other plans relating to their house on hold. The situation has been disruptive and left them in limbo.

AXA also accepts the delays were significant and has offered compensation. So the issue for me to consider is whether the increased offer of £800 is fair in all the circumstances. I appreciate that no amount of money can make up for the stress and inconvenience that this matter has caused Mr and Mrs I. And awarding compensation in circumstances such as these isn't an exact science. But having taken everything into account I'm satisfied that £800 is fair compensation.

AXA has agreed to replace the parquet floor during the reinstatement works, or directly compensate for the loss. I'm satisfied that is fair.

### **My final decision**

My final decision is that I uphold this complaint. I require AXA Insurance UK Plc to:

- Pay Mr and Mrs I £800 in compensation.
- Include the cost of repairing the parquet floor in the reinstatement works or compensate Mr and Mrs I directly for the damage to the floor.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr I and Mrs I to accept or reject my decision before 11 October 2024.

Lindsey Woloski  
**Ombudsman**