

## **The complaint**

Mr V complains that a price quoted by One Call Insurance Services Limited to add a car to a motor insurance policy was higher than advertised.

## **What happened**

Mr V held a motor insurance policy arranged by One Call. He contacted One Call, referring to an offer included in the policy documents which allowed him to add a second car to the policy for a cost of £37.50.

One Call obtained details of the car Mr V wanted to add to the policy, and said the additional cost would be £93.75. Mr V was unhappy that this was higher than was referenced in the policy documents.

When One Call rejected Mr V's complaint, he referred it to our service. Our investigator thought One Call had acted fairly. The documents said the price offered was subject to criteria being met, and having reviewed the information provided by One Call she thought the price it had quoted was reasonable. Mr V disagreed and asked for an ombudsman's decision.

## **My provisional decision**

On 8 October 2024, I issued a provisional decision as I was minded to uphold Mr V's complaint. In that provisional decision, I said:

The documents sent to Mr V when he took out the policy say, in respect of adding a second car to the policy:

*Eligibility is quite simple*

- *The additional car has been registered in the last 20 years*
- *It doesn't exceed a value of £45,000 (£70,000 if fitted with a tracking device)*
- *You, or your spouse/partner, own or lease the additional vehicle you want to add to your existing policy*

*All we need is a few minutes of your time and we can have your additional car insured for a price of £37.50 per month. To add another car to the Platinum Club, you can speak to our team [here](#).*

There's no dispute that Mr V contacted One Call with a view to taking up this offer and wanted to add a second car to the policy. It's also accepted that the second car met the criteria set out above. One Call obtained information from Mr V and obtained a quote to add the second car, which came to £93.75 including relevant taxes and fees. That was the amount Mr V was told by One Call it would cost to add the second car.

The terms and conditions in relation to the second car offer do say, however:

*Underwriting criteria will apply. Acceptance criteria applies.*

and

*Eligibility is subject to approval based on further criteria and kept at our discretion.*

I can understand Mr V's frustration at being told the cost of adding the second car was more than the advertised price.

When calculating the cost of insurance, including add-ons such as a second car, insurers consider a number of factors, which include (but aren't limited to) the car being insured and information about the drivers of the car.

We've been provided with the details One Call entered into its systems to establish the cost of adding a second car. I haven't seen anything to suggest that the information was incorrect or any errors were made when obtaining the quote.

I know how strongly Mr V feels about this, and he's told us he can't have faith in One Call's quote, or the reasons behind it, without being provided details of how the relevant insurer rates certain risks and the underwriting criteria.

However, while that information has been shared with our service, we aren't in a position to share this with Mr V. The information about how an insurer calculates its premiums, which risks it will cover and how it rates those risks is commercially sensitive. We have seen this information and I'm satisfied the quote given to Mr V reflected the insurer's calculations.

Which factors an insurer takes into account when calculating premiums, and how it weights those factors, is for the insurer to determine. We won't usually comment on that, or tell a business how it should calculate premiums.

However, I think there is another issue which needs to be considered here. When communicating with its customers, One Call's advertising needs to be clear, fair and not misleading. I note the offer said the cost of adding a car to the policy was £37.50. Significantly, it didn't say the price was, for example, "from £37.50" or "for as little as £37.50."

Furthermore, while the documentation says that eligibility criteria apply, a reasonable interpretation of that would be that there are criteria which will determine whether a policyholder's car is eligible at all, as opposed to the eligibility criteria determining the cost.

There's nothing in the documentation provided to Mr V which gives any indication, in my view, that the cost of adding an eligible second car would be more than £37.50.

I'm satisfied that a reasonable interpretation of the wording used in the offer was that if the car met the criteria set out (which Mr V's did) then the cost would be £37.50.

On balance, therefore, I'm satisfied that the communication wasn't clear and gave the impression that the cost of adding an eligible second car was £37.50. One Call hasn't suggested Mr V's car wasn't eligible, just that the cost of adding it was more than £37.50.

On this basis, I feel Mr V's complaint should be upheld. I'm aware that Mr V didn't take up the offer and insured the car separately. I'm not minded to ask One Call to refund Mr V the difference between what he has paid and the £37.50 offer price. As I've said, the cost quoted was, I think, fair based on the quotes obtained, and Mr V could still have taken that offer up. I'm mindful that the terms and conditions of a separate policy may be different as well and provide different levels of cover.

However, I do think One Call should pay compensation to Mr V to recognise the distress and inconvenience caused to him due to the unclear communication and wording of the offer. Mr V would have been rightly concerned and confused when told that the cost of adding a car he believed met the eligibility criteria was more than double the amount quoted. He also had to obtain alternative insurance for that car, rather than adding it to the existing policy. Doing so caused him inconvenience. I think in light of those points, One Call should pay £200 compensation which I believe properly reflects the impact on Mr V.

### **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.

Neither party has responded to my provisional decision before the deadline of 22 October 2024. While this means no new points have been raised which I need to consider, I have reviewed my findings and the evidence available to me.

I remain satisfied that Mr V's complaint should be upheld and One Call should pay £200 compensation. This is for the same reasons I've previously explained. The documents provided to Mr V didn't give any indication the cost of adding a second car would be more than £37.50 and so I understand why Mr V was concerned and frustrated when he was told the cost would be higher.

### **My final decision**

I uphold Mr V's complaint. In order to put things right, One Call Insurance Services Limited must pay £200 compensation. It must pay this amount within 28 days of us telling it Mr V accepts our decision. If it doesn't, it must pay simple interest at a rate of 8% on this amount from that date to the date of final settlement.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr V to accept or reject my decision before 20 November 2024.

Ben Williams  
**Ombudsman**