

The complaint

Mr D says Ageas Insurance Limited (“Ageas”) hasn’t offered to settle his claim on his motor insurance policy fairly as it hasn’t valued his car correctly after it was deemed beyond economic repair following an accident. All reference to Ageas includes its agents.

What happened

Mr D took out a car insurance policy around November 2024. In February 2025, he was involved in a road traffic accident. Ageas thought the car was beyond economic repair and it offered him around £9,532 to settle his claim – as the market value of the car. To reach this valuation, Ageas said it looked at industry trade guides and adverts for the sale of similar cars at the time, taking into account the condition and mileage of the car. Ageas also said it considered the optional factory fitted extras Mr D says he had fitted to the car. But it said due to the age of the car, these didn’t make a difference as their value had decreased over time.

Mr D disagreed that the amount offered reflected the fair value of his car so he made a complaint. He said he was unable to see any comparable cars being sold with the extras he’s had fitted, either for the amount offered by Ageas or at all. And he said if he was to take the amount offered, he’d need to spend an additional £4,000 on upgrades to a replacement car, to get it to the same specification as his car. Ageas didn’t agree its offer was unfair so Mr D asked our service to look into it.

Our Investigator didn’t uphold the complaint. After reviewing the industry trade guides herself, she thought the valuation Ageas gave was fair. And based on a bespoke valuation she’d seen, she didn’t think the optional extras Mr D’s car had, increased the value of the car to the extent he thought it did. She said she reviewed the adverts but they didn’t make a difference to the outcome.

Mr D didn’t accept our Investigator’s opinion. He highlighted an advert he’d seen for a comparable car on a car selling website for around £13,250. But he explained he was unable to provide a link to or a copy of the advert as it was no longer available. This didn’t change the outcome the Investigator reached as she said she was unable to consider the advert without seeing it. As the complaint wasn’t resolved at that stage, it was passed to me to reach a decision on.

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.

Mr D's policy says Ageas will cover the market value of the car. In summary, that's defined as the cost of replacing the car at the date of the loss considering, for example, its age and mileage. Ageas has valued Mr D's car at £9,532. And having looked at its value around the time of the incident using industry trade guides, I think this offer's reasonable. The valuations the guides give are based on the prices of similar cars of a similar age and mileage for sale at the time of the loss. The valuation Ageas has given is similar to the valuations we've got from industry trade guides. And I can see it's offered Mr D a value which is between our two highest valuations and closest to the top valuation we've seen.

I understand Mr D thinks the correct value of the car is more than Ageas – and the trade guides – have given. And this seems mainly to be because he fitted optional extras to the car so he thinks this should enhance the valuation. But we've also got a bespoke trade guide which enables users to specify optional extras when obtaining valuations. And due to the age of the vehicle and depreciation of the extras, even with these added, Ageas' offer is higher than the amount that guide values the car at.

I've also considered the adverts both Ageas and Mr D have referred us to. The majority of the adverts Ageas have provided show cars advertised at prices lower than it's offered Mr D and either are similar to or lower than the industry trade guide valuations. There is one advert Ageas has given us which is for a higher price but it is for a slightly newer model.

Mr D's referred to a car advertised on a car selling website at a higher price. But he's been unable to provide the advert as it's no longer available. Whilst I don't doubt what Mr D says he's seen, it's difficult for me to take it into account without being able to see the advert and weigh up how relevant and comparable it is to Mr D's car myself. So it doesn't make a difference to the outcome of this case.

Mr D's highlighted that it's difficult to purchase a car of the same make and condition and with the same upgrades as his car for the amount Ageas has offered him. So he doesn't think Ageas' offer puts him in the position he was in before the loss. But the adverts and trade guides I've seen don't support what he's said here. And whilst I understand he spent a significant amount on the extras he had fitted – and he's said he'd need to spend a similar amount again if he had them newly fitted on another car – I haven't seen any evidence in this case that they increased the value of his car by the amount he says they did.

So, based on everything I've seen in this case, including what Mr D's said, I think Ageas has offered to settle his claim fairly. And I don't think it needs to offer anything further.

My final decision

It is my final decision that I don't uphold this complaint. Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mr D to accept or reject my decision before 24 July 2025.

Nadya Neve
Ombudsman