

The complaint

Mr F complains about esure Insurance Limited's (esure) handling of a claim made under his motor insurance policy.

Any references to esure include its agents. Mr F has been represented by Mrs F.

What happened

In July 2024 Mr F's parked car was hit by a third-party. Having made a claim, Mr F says he was initially told the car was repairable, and it was collected so the repairs could be carried out. Mr F says he asked for updates, but two months later was told the car wasn't repairable after all. The car was sent to an auction company and Mr F says he told esure on a number of occasions that he wanted to keep the car. esure reassured Mr F the car would not be auctioned without his consent.

Mr F said the next thing he knew, a cheque arrived. Despite assurances otherwise, the car had been sold. Mr F complained to esure who acknowledged it had failed to prevent the car from being sold, and paid Mr F £650 compensation.

Unhappy with esure's handling of the claim, Mr F referred his complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service. He said the car had belonged to his late son and held significant sentimental value. To put things right, Mr F said esure should return the car or pay increased compensation which reflected the emotional value of the car, as well as providing a letter of apology.

Mr F's concerns were considered by our investigator who said he considered the compensation paid by esure was fair in the circumstances. Mrs F replied to our investigator and said she didn't agree. Mrs F said they'd told esure several times to say why the car was so important, and to find out the car had been sold despite this had caused significant distress. She said she considered compensation of £5,000 to be a fairer figure. As no agreement was reached, this case was 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.

Mr F has taken great care to tell us why the car held such sentimental value to him. I was very sorry to read that Mr F's son had passed away, and understand why the car was so important to Mr F.

It's not in dispute esure could and should have handled this matter better. It's clear from the file notes esure was aware of Mr F's desire to retain the car. esure has apologised for the impact its actions had on Mr F, and paid compensation. As I don't need to decide if esure acted correctly, I only need to decide if it has taken sufficient steps to put things right for Mr F.

Mrs F responded to the investigator's conclusions and noted that there wasn't really any financial amount which could truly compensate for the loss of something so sentimentally significant. The car can't be returned, which Mr F indicated would ideally be the course of action to put things right for him. Mrs F said compensation of £5,000 would be a fairer amount to reflect the distress experienced by the family.

I've carefully considered what Mr F told us in his complaint form and correspondence, along with what Mrs F said after the investigator reached his conclusion. I appreciate this is deeply upsetting for Mr F's whole family. However, my powers as an ombudsman are limited here to only considering the impact on Mr F as the policyholder.

It's clear esure's failure to act on Mr F's request to retain the car caused considerable distress and upset, and that the loss of the car is of significant upset to Mr F and his family. However, I'm satisfied the compensation of £650 fairly reflects the impact esure's error had on Mr F. I'm sorry this isn't the answer Mr F will be hoping for, but I'm not going to require esure to do anything more to put things right.

My final decision

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 F to accept or reject my decision before 24 July 2025.

Emma Hawkins
Ombudsman