

The complaint

Mrs Y complains Automobile Association Insurance Services Limited (“AAISL”) unfairly increased the price of her property insurance policy after she was directed to its website from a price comparison site. She also complains it didn’t send her policy documentation and she’s unhappy with the way it handled her complaint.

What happened

Mrs Y took out a property insurance policy covering her buildings and contents in November 2024 through a price comparison website. She’s explained, when she input her details on the price comparison website, it generated a quote for the policy. She was then redirected to AAISL’s direct website at which point she noticed the details about her property were incorrect as it showed ‘mid-terrace’. As her property is at the end of a terrace, she amended the details and the price quoted for the policy increased. Mrs Y says there was no option on the price comparison website to input end of terrace.

Mrs Y was unhappy with what had happened. She also said she was concerned that had she not noticed the incorrect property type on the policy application, she may not have been covered if she needed to make a claim. In response, AAISL said the price comparison website had a full list of options including ‘end terrace’. And had Mrs Y selected this option, it would’ve mapped through to AAISL’s website. So Mrs Y’s complaint wasn’t upheld as it was determined that the quote changed to reflect the correct risk once the correct property type was selected.

After Mrs Y took out the policy, AAISL says it sent her an email with her policy documents attached and inviting her to set up an online account to be able to view her policy documents at any time. Mrs Y says the only document attached to the email was an Insurance Product Information Document (“IPID”). She says she didn’t access the online account and provided screenshots of a recent conversation she had through AAISL’s chat function in which an agent confirmed this. In any event, she’s said she would’ve wanted physical copies to be posted to her and she requested her documentation as part of her complaint but she still hasn’t been sent them.

AAISL didn’t agree with what Mrs Y has said and it provided screenshots of its internal systems which it says shows she received the email and opened the documents around an hour later. It also said Mrs Y selected to receive her policy documentation online and it let Mrs Y know she could access them online when she raised her complaint.

Unhappy with what had happened, Mrs Y raised a complaint on 13 November 2024. AAISL sent its final response letter to Mrs Y on 2 January 2025 in which it said it didn’t think it had done anything wrong. As the complaint wasn’t resolved at that stage, Mrs Y asked our service to look into things. She also complained she wasn’t happy with the handling of her complaint by AAISL, in particular she said it had caused delays.

Our Investigator didn't uphold the complaint. He thought the correct property type options were available to Mrs Y on the price comparison website and the quote was increased due to the risk changing. He also thought AAISL had provided enough evidence to show the policy documents were sent to Mrs Y and he was satisfied it had responded to her complaint within the time limits set out by the Financial Conduct Authority ("FCA"). As the complaint wasn't resolved at that stage, it 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.

Based on what I've seen in this case, I've decided not to uphold it. I know Mrs Y will be very disappointed but I don't think AAISL has done anything wrong. I'll explain why.

Change of price

The crux of the matter in this case isn't whether the price set for Mrs Y's policy was fair – that's not what I'm considering here. Instead, Mrs Y's unhappy the price of the policy changed when she corrected an error she'd noticed in the property type recorded after she was directed through to AAISL's website. And she thinks that's unfair and AAISL should honour the price she was quoted on the price comparison website.

I know Mrs Y has said there wasn't an option to input 'end of terrace' on the price comparison website. But AAISL has given us screenshots of what customers see on the price comparison website and this shows the option to either select 'terraced' or 'end terrace' under the type of house. AAISL has also given details of the property type populated on its website based on the information put into the price comparison site. And based on what it's shown us in this case I'm satisfied if Mrs Y had selected the correct option on the price comparison site, it would've carried that information through to AAISL's website.

Whilst I appreciate Mrs Y's unhappy the price changed when she corrected the property type on AAISL's website, insurance prices are set based on a risk assessment. And it's not unusual for some property types to be considered 'riskier' than others. I also note Mrs Y was made aware of the change in price before she went ahead with purchasing the policy from AAISL. So I don't think she was committed and had the opportunity to go elsewhere if she wasn't happy with the price. So based on everything I've seen in this case, I don't agree AAISL has done anything wrong here.

I've considered Mrs Y's comments that if she hadn't noticed the incorrect property type recorded on AAISL's website, she might not have been covered if she needed to make a claim. But as I don't consider it likely this was down to AAISL's error, this point doesn't make a difference to the outcome of this case. And in any event, whilst I understand why this might've caused her some worry, when considering whether things went wrong in this case, I've thought about what actually happened and not what might've happened.

Policy documents

Mrs Y says she wasn't sent any policy documentation after she took out the policy. AAISL says it sent Mrs Y an email after the policy was taken out which it's sent us a copy of. It's said this email had Mrs Y's policy documentation attached to it and included details of how to access her policy documentation at any time online. AAISL has also given us screenshots of its internal screens to show she opened it – so I think she knew she'd received the email and attached documents and how to access it.

Mrs Y accepts she received this email but she says the only attachment was an IPID and not her full policy document. But even if that is the case, IPIDs provide a short summary of the most important and relevant information about insurance policies, giving a simple overview of the product purchased. And in any event, I'm satisfied from what both parties have sent us, AAISL gave Mrs Y instructions on how to access all of her policy documentation and it was up to her whether or not to access them.

Mrs Y complains she didn't get hard copies of her policy documentation in the post. But I can see that's because her communication preference was set as online only. I note AAISL offered to change her communication preference in the online chat she's sent us screenshots of and she's taken it up on that.

I know Mrs Y says she didn't receive the hard copies of her documentation after requesting it as part of her complaint. But I can see from the complaint notes she said she'd like to add that she was yet to receive her documents. AAISL let Mrs Y know she could access them online and I think that was reasonable as I don't think it was clear at that point she specifically wanted hard copies.

Complaint handling

Mrs Y complains AAISL didn't handle her complaint well, in particular it caused long delays. But based on the date of her complaint, AAISL had up until 8 January 2025 to reply as per the dispute resolution rules set out in the FCA's handbook. AAISL provided a full response to Mrs Y's complaint on 2 January 2025 so I'm satisfied it met its obligation under the rules and I don't consider there was an unreasonable delay.

My final decision

For the reasons I've given, I don't uphold Mrs Y's complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs Y to accept or reject my decision before 7 August 2025.

Nadya Neve
Ombudsman