

## **The complaint**

Mrs C complains about delays in Zurich Insurance PLC's handling of a claim she made on a buildings insurance policy for damage caused by an escape of water.

Reference to Zurich includes its agents.

## **What happened**

Mrs C benefits from a buildings insurance policy as a leaseholder of a flat in a larger block.

When her property was damaged by an escape of water in another flat, she made a claim for the damage caused in May 2024.

Zurich accepted the claim but in August 2024 Mrs C complained about how long it was taking to progress. She didn't think things were moving as quickly as they could and should have been.

Ultimately, Zurich issued two final response letters (FRLs). It said there were some small delays, but maintained the claim was proceeding as it should be. It offered Mrs C £400 compensation, which she accepted.

But, because the claim continued to stall in Mrs C's eyes, she brought her complaint to the Financial Ombudsman Service.

Our Investigator didn't recommend it be upheld. She said she acknowledged the matter may have progressed, but she could only look up to the point Zurich sent its latest final response, which was December 2024.

Our Investigator thought that in that timeframe, Zurich hadn't caused significant or unavoidable delays. She therefore thought that the £400 compensation was fair and reasonable and didn't ask it to do anything more.

Mrs C didn't agree with this and asked for an Ombudsman's decision. She thought delays had been caused by Zurich questioning costs it agreed on other properties damaged by the escape of water.

## **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.

Having done so, I'm not upholding it. I understand this won't be the answer Mrs C was hoping for.

It's worth pointing out here that my decision only concerns events from the claim being made, up to Zurich's December FRL. Things may well have progressed (or not) since then. But anything that happened (or didn't) after this FRL will need to form a new complaint.

While I've considered everything, I'll not be commenting on every bit of evidence or argument raised. Instead, in line with our role as an informal service, I'll comment on what I consider key.

Key to this complaint is the delay. And there's an acknowledgement from all parties involved that the claim was not as progressed as much as it should have been by December 2024. Zurich has paid £400 to compensate for that. So I need to consider whether that is enough, and if it isn't, what is.

Our Investigator set out a timeline of the key events. I don't intend to repeat that here. Ultimately though I'm satisfied that compensation is enough, for the period I'm looking at. There are some small delays on Zurich's side. But there are also periods of time where Zurich are waiting for responses from Mrs C or her loss assessor.

I know a point of contention is Zurich questioning costs submitted. But I'm satisfied that was something it was able to do. I understand Mrs C, via her loss assessor has said other similar costs were agreed on other properties for the same work. But I'm not able to look into that. I can only look into this complaint. And I don't think it was unreasonable for Zurich to question the costs presented to it if it felt they were too high.

So, overall, there have been some delays, but I don't consider Zurich to have caused any substantial delay or that it had unreasonably slowed progress of this claim (up to December 2024). Therefore, I'm satisfied that the £400 compensation paid at this stage was fair and reasonable, in line with our guidance and awards we've made in similar circumstances. I don't require Zurich to do anything more.

### **My final decision**

For the reasons set out above, my final decision is that I don't uphold this complaint.

Under the rules of the Financial Ombudsman Service, I'm required to ask Mrs C to accept or reject my decision before 31 October 2025.

Joe Thornley  
**Ombudsman**